A·WOMAN·OF YESTERDAY

CAROLINE·A·MASON

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A WOMAN OF YESTERDAY

A Woman of Yesterday

BY

CAROLINE A. MASON

AUTHOR OF "A MINISTER OF THE WORLD," "THE MINISTER OF CARTHAGE," "A WIND FLOWER," ETC.

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification."

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Our share of night to bear,
  Our share of morning,
Our blank in bliss to fill,
  Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,
  Some lose their way.
Here a mist, and there a mist,
  Afterwards — day !

EMILY DICKINSON.

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BOOK I

MORNING

CHAPTER I

I rise and raise my claspèd hands to Thee !
Henceforth, the darkness hath no part in me,
Thy sacrifice this day, —
Abiding firm, and with a freeman's might
Stemming the waves of passion in the fight.
— John Henry Newman.

Where the Monk River makes its way through the mountain wall in one of the northern counties of Vermont, lies the small, white village of Haran. Although isolated and remote from the world, unknown and unconsidered beyond certain narrow limits, this village possessed, forty years ago, a local importance as being the county town, the seat also of a Young Ladies' Seminary of some reputation, and an Orthodox church which boasted a line of ministers of exalted piety and scholarly attainment.

The incumbent in the year 1869 was the Rev. Samuel Mallison. His pastorate had now extended over twenty years, and he was reverenced far beyond the bounds of his parish for learning and godliness.

It was a June Saturday night in that year, and the hour was late. In the low-roofed garret of the parsonage of Haran the figure of a tall, thin girl with a candle in her hand moved swiftly and softly to the head of a steep flight of stairs, which gave access to the garret from the floor below. Some one had called her name.

"Yes, father," she returned, and a certain vibration of restrained feeling was perceptible in her voice, "it

was I. I am sorry I disturbed you. Were you asleep?"

All was dark below, and no person could be seen, but again came the man's voice.

"What were you doing, Anna?" was the question.

"Only putting away —" here the girl faltered and stopped speaking. The candle in her hand shook, and threw a strange, wavering shadow of her shape upon the long, rough timbers of the wall. The roof was so low where she stood that of necessity her head was bent sharply forward. The outline of her shoulders was meagre and angular; her arms and body had neither the grace of a girl nor the curves of a woman; they were simply lean and long. There was something of loftiness, and even of beauty, in the face, but the cheeks were hollow, the lines all lacking in softness. The *ensemble* was grave and strenuous for a girl of eighteen.

She began again.

"I was nailing up that box of books, you remember. I thought now, you know, I ought to do it."

Something like a groan seemed to float up from the darkness below. There was no other reply for a moment, and then the father's voice said slowly: —

"To take back later such an action is a greater violation of the moral nature than to avoid performing it. If it has been given you as duty, it is well done, but be very sure."

A smile, brooding, and even sad, altered the girl's face as she reflected for a little.

"I am very sure," she said softly, but without hesitation.

"Then, good night. Sleep, now. Let to-morrow take thought for the things of itself, Anna."

"Good night, father." The little lingering of her voice on the last word gave to it the force of a term of endearment, which it would not have occurred to Anna Mallison at that time to add.

A door closed below, presently, and the house was still.

The garret extended over the entire house, and its unlighted spaces seemed to stretch indefinitely on all sides from the little circle of light shed by the one candle. The place was wholly open, save that at the front gable, below the highest point in the peak of the roof, a partition of planed but unpainted boards enclosed a small chamber. The narrow door of it stood open.

As Anna approached this door she cast her glance to a far, dim corner, where in stiff order a wooden box of moderate size stood upon a chest. She crossed to the place, passed her hand over the lid of this box, satisfied herself that it was firmly and evenly fastened, and then gathered up some nails and a hammer, which she put away on the ledge formed by a square, projecting rafter. This accomplished, she came back and entered the chamber, which was sparely enough furnished, undressed, put out her candle, and sat down in the open gable window.

Even if to-morrow were left to take thought for the things of itself, there were many yesterdays which she wished to meet to-night. And for that to-morrow, — she was hardly ready to leave all thought of it yet, for she regarded it as the most solemn and important crisis in her eighteen years of life. On the Sabbath, which a few hours would bring, she was to be received into the village church of which her father was pastor, and this event would signify that all her previous existence, the

time past of her life, was a closed and finished chapter, and that henceforth all things were to become new. Life was to be furnished now with new pleasures, new pains, new motives, new mental occupations. A somewhat sterner and sadder life she fancied it, full of self-examination, sacrifice, and high endeavour, for she felt it must suffice her to have wrought her own will in the past, "the will of the flesh," as her father and the Apostle Paul termed it; a phrase which had but a vague import to her own understanding, and yet exerted a powerful influence upon her conscience.

To her mind there was an intimate connection between that now sealed box and "the will of the flesh."

It was when she was fifteen years old that Anna had discovered one day among the ranks of chests and trunks which lined the outer stretches of the garret, this small box of books, thickly covered with dust. At first she had been greatly surprised, since books were the things her father most earnestly desired and needed, his scanty collection being quite insufficient for his use, and being helped out by no village library. Every book in the house had borne to Anna's imagination a potent dignity and value, for each one embodied a persistent need, and represented an almost severe economy before its possession had been achieved.

And here were nearly thirty respectably bound volumes packed away for moth and dust alone to live upon — what could it mean? Had they been forgotten? Anna had devoured their titles with consuming wonder and curiosity, and with the ardour of the instinctive book-lover. Like Aurora Leigh, she had "found the secret of a garret room."

There was a volume of Ossian, — heroic, sounding

words caught her eye as she turned the rough, yellow leaves; Landor's "Hellenics and Idylls"; a copy bound in marred, brown leather of Pope's translation of the "Iliad," published, she noted, in 1806, almost fifty years before she was born; the poems of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge, and of the earlier American poets; and a thin gilded volume of Blake's "Songs of Innocence."

Besides these were worn volumes of Plato, of Greek and Latin poets, and German editions of Faust and Nathan der Weise. At the bottom of the box Anna found a faded commonplace book with her father's name inscribed on the first page, and the date 1840. It contained translations of Greek poetry which she supposed to have been made by her father, although of this she was not sure. She did not read them, for she felt that she had no right to explore anything so personal without his permission. This scruple, however, did not extend to the books which filled the box, although Anna felt rather than understood that they had not been packed away together thus by accident, or left by forgetfulness. She perceived that they denoted some decisive experience in her father's inner life, that spiritual personality of the man, which possessed to the young girl's thought an august and even mysterious sacredness.

Whatever these books had meant to him, and for whatever reason they had been exiled from his meagre library, they became to his daughter the most brilliant and alluring feature of a somewhat colourless girlhood, the charm of them enhanced by secrecy; for, with the reticence characteristic of the family life, Anna never alluded to her discovery. Neither did she ever remove these literary remains from their seclusion in the garret; this

would have seemed an act of violence, but around the box which held them she formed a kind of enclosing barricade of chests and old furniture. The little nook thus formed she regarded as her place of refuge, of private and unguessed delight. A candle at night, and rays of light piercing the wide cracks under the eaves by day, made reading easy to her clear young eyes, even in the dust and dusk of the dim place. And so for two years, through biting cold and searing heat, Anna fed her mind and heart on the poetry which had ruled her father's generation, unknown and unsanctioned by any one. Then one day came a strange event; she never recalled it without a sense of unshed tears.

It was late one August afternoon, and, her day's work faithfully performed, Anna had gone up to her garret room to make her simple toilet for the evening meal. There were a few moments to spare, and, as usual, she hastened to her nook, and was soon deep in Prometheus, for Shelley just then controlled her imagination. Her father came into the garret behind her, a very unwonted thing, and Anna heard the sharp, scraping sound as he drew out from the recesses where it had stood for years, a small, brown, hair-covered trunk, studded with brass nails, forming the initials S. D. M. It had been his own during his college days, and had seen but little service since. One of Anna's brothers was to start for college in a day or two, and the old trunk was to serve a second generation in its quest for learning.

Startled by the unusual noise, Anna rose in her place, and, seeing her father, spoke to him, whereupon he crossed the garret to where she stood; a small, thin man, bent a little, with a pale brown skin, prominent eyes, and a dome-shaped head, the hair thin on the crown

even to baldness, but soft and silken and long enough behind the ears to show its tendency to curl.

"What have you there, Anna?" Samuel Mallison had asked, peering with short-sighted, searching eyes between the bars of a battered crib which Anna had used as a part of her wall of partition.

"Poetry, father," she had replied, handing him the book with eager, innocent enthusiasm; "oh, it is very beautiful! I love it so."

Her father, looking at the book, flushed strangely, and a sudden, indescribable change passed over his face. Pushing aside the rubbish which separated him from Anna, he was immediately at her side, and in silence had bent over the box. He had drawn it nearer the light, and seemed looking on the side for some sign or inscription. There was a piercing eagerness in his eyes. Then Anna had noticed what had escaped her hitherto, the initials, S. D. M., followed by the reference, Matthew v. 29, and the date, 1848, written in ink on the lower corner, dim with dust stains and faded with the processes of time.

Still her father had not spoken, but, sitting down on a chest, he had bent over the box, and had drawn from it one after the other the buried books, with a hand as gentle as if he were touching the tokens of a dead love. Anna had stood aside, silent and abashed, a strange tightening sensation in her throat. Her father seemed to have forgotten her. At last he had reached the old commonplace book underneath all. The flush on his face had deepened, and Anna had thought there were tears in his eyes as he glanced rapidly over its yellowed pages, with the verses in fine, stiff writing and faded ink. Then he had closed the book with a long sigh, had laid

it carefully back in its place, and rising, had walked up and down in the low garret for many minutes in some evident agitation.

A sense of guilt and apprehension had fallen upon Anna in her perplexity, but when, in the end, he had come and stood beside her, there was a great gentleness on his face.

"And so you love those books, my child?" he had asked her briefly.

"Yes, father."

"I understand. I loved them, but I gave them up — twenty years ago, almost. They became a snare." He had been, then, silent a moment, while a peculiar conflict of thought was reflected in his face. "Yes," he continued, as if convinced of something called in doubt, "they became a snare — to *me* — but for you I cannot decide. It may not be for you to drink of my cup. Who knows?" and with that he had turned and left her, and left the garret, the trunk forgotten; and Anna had laid the books back, soberly and with a great heartache, almost as if she were laying dust dear and sacred in its coffin.

The matter had never been alluded to again between the father and daughter, but Anna knew that she was free to read, and so read on. And still her unalloyed happiness in her hidden treasure was gone. A question, a suspicion, a disturbing doubt, was now attached to it. It was not wrong to read this poetry, but plainly there was a more excellent way, a higher ground which her father had reached, and which, with her inborn passion for perfection, she, too, must some day attain. Slowly and silently this conviction matured within her.

And so to-night, on the eve of her day of supreme

consecration, Anna, in her turn, had buried out of her sight, as her father had before her, the poetry into which she had been pouring her young awakening life, silently and secretly, but with a fervour which the reader of many books can never know. They had spoken to her in mighty voices, these great spirits, so free, joyous, and mysterious in their power; but they were not the voice *of God*, and therefore she must listen to them no more. This had been a tree of life to her, but its fruit was forbidden. The axe must thenceforth be laid unflinchingly at the root of the tree. Such was the initial impulse, single, stern, and absolute, of Anna's awakening religious nature.

Theologians in the sixties did not talk of the immanence of God.

CHAPTER II

Children of men ! the unseen Power whose eye
Forever doth accompany mankind,
Hath looked on no religion scornfully
That man did ever find.

Which has not taught weak wills how much they can ?
Which has not fall'n on the dry heart like rain ?
Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man :
Thou must be born again !

— Matthew Arnold.

Anna Mallison's working theory of the human family in its moral and religious relations (and she recognized no other as of importance) was as destitute of shading as a carpenter's house plan. Indeed, her hypothesis unconsciously bore a certain pictorial resemblance to the ground plan of a colonial house — a hall running through the middle with two rooms on each side ! There was, straight through the centre of her moral universe, a wide, divisive, neutral passage in which dwelt uneasily all people who had not been regenerated, but who had not rejected salvation formally and forever. Here were such heathen and young children, and such thoughtless and unhardened impenitent as might yet listen to the divine call. At the right of this central hall, following Anna's scheme of the race, were two wide rooms : the first bright with a subdued and varied light ; the second, opening beyond the first, overflowing with undimmed and celestial radiance. The first was the Church, the place of saints on earth, the second was heaven, easily reached

from the first. But the entrance to the first room from the central space was obscure, difficult, and mysterious, and few were they who found it.

At the left of the great hall were likewise two vast connecting chambers. A wide door stood ever open into the first, through which a throng continually passed. Here were dimness and dread, lighted only by false and baleful gleams; and in the room beyond, the blackness of darkness, and that forever.

This first room was the abode of those who deliberately chose the world and turned away from God, whose fitting end was in the awful gloom of that place of torment and wailing beyond.

Above the right-hand division, high and lifted up, dwelt in unthinkable glory the God of her fathers, holy, but to her subconscious sense, ineffective, else why were earthquakes, murders, prisons, insanities? and why, indeed, those populous chambers on the left?

Over them presided a rapid, hurtling Spirit, always engaged in her imagination in falling like lightning from heaven. He was Miltonic necessarily, but also much like one of Ossian's heroes, and, on the whole, a more imposing force than the Creator whose power he seemed so successfully to have usurped.

In fine, Anna believed in two gods, an infinite spirit of good, and an infinite spirit of evil, although she would have called herself strictly monotheistic.

The neutral space between the realms of the Good and Evil was the battleground of these two mighty spirits. Here prophets, apostles, and preachers were calling loudly and untiringly upon all men to repent, and to find the entrance to the company of the redeemed. From time to time some swift and valorous spirit of

man or angel would even make excursion into the dim outer room on the left, and bring thence a scorched and spotted soul, saved, but so as by fire. But such events were rare and not to be presumed upon or expected.

It was all perfectly clear to Anna, the classification and grouping precise, exact, and satisfactory. Black was very black; and white, very white. She had herself until very recently belonged in the neutral hall, but she now believed herself to be "experiencing religion," a fine old phrase, which was in effect to be pressing successfully through that obscure opening which led into the outer court of heaven.

But just here there was a weakness in the system. Theologians and preachers like her father boldly declared the contrary, and asserted that the processes of entering the kingdom of heaven were as marked and unmistakable as the great general divisions of saints and sinners. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was always depicted as norm and type. To be sure, all the processes were not in each case marked by equal distinctness, but the logical order was the same. In the first stage of the progress the sinner was said to be "under conviction" or "experiencing a sense of sin"; and the more bitter and overwhelming was this first phase, the better was the diagnosis from the professional point of view. At this point the penitent was to realize that, whatever his former life had been, even if a life of prayer and unselfish devotion, it had been wholly displeasing to God, and that, as tending to self-righteousness, such a life was peculiarly dangerous. By nature, there could not be in the human character any real moral excellence, or what was more technically known as "evangelical virtue."

All this Samuel Mallison had recently set forth in a

series of sermons on "Human Depravity; its Degree, its Extent, its Derivation, and its Punishment," which had been considered of extraordinary value and merit.

But it was just here that his daughter, for all the logic and learning to which she was privileged to listen, stumbled and stood still. For weeks her spiritual development appeared to be arrested. She was silent, uncommunicative, and disappointing to all the older members and office-bearers in her father's church.

"What is the matter with Anna?" was the frequent question put to Mrs. Mallison in the parish. "Why don't she *come out?*"

"Oh, she is under conviction all the time," would be the reply, with a somewhat decided shake of the head. "We let her alone pretty much, Mr. Mallison and I. It isn't best to say too much, you know, when anybody has reached that point. We can see that conscience is working with her."

The questioner would depart with the belief that Anna's conviction was of an unusually profound and interesting nature, like a disease with a complication; but if they had asked Anna herself, she might have told them that it was from the absence of this conviction, rather than from its intensity, that she was suffering. She was too honest to assume a virtue, or even a vice, if she had it not, and seek it as she would, a poignant sense of sin did not visit her. She had cast about her, and searched her own heart and life in a distinct embarrassment at finding so few clearly defined and indubitable sins of which to plead guilty; she had even secretly reproached her parents in her heart for having insisted upon an almost faultless standard of daily living, since conformity to their will seemed to be in itself a snare, and to

place her at a distinct disadvantage now as compared with the flagrant sinner. Why had they taught her to pray, since she was now told that the prayers of the unregenerate were displeasing to God?

She used to sit during the Sunday morning service and look at the neighbours in their pews around her, at their children and grandchildren, and at the members of her own family, seeking to find a person whom she was conscious of having wronged, or toward whom she cherished a feeling of enmity or envy. The only result of this species of self-examination had been to bring to her remembrance a childish, half-forgotten grudge against a girl with fair curls, Malvina Loveland by name, who had once ridiculed her at school, for wearing one of Lucia's dresses made over. Anna drew this dim and fading fault remorselessly up to the light, and formally and forever forgave the unconscious "Mally." But the longing for a deep experience of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" remained unsatisfied. Like many another sincere and seeking soul of that day, she yearned in vain to fill out in its rigid precision of sequence that spiritual programme which the theologians prescribed.

Her father gave her free access to the precious, if narrow, resources of his library, and she read the Edwards, both elder and younger, the elder Dwight, Bunyan, Baxter, and the rest, in place of her dear pagans whose end she now clearly foresaw. She read of the "depraved moral conduct of every infant who lives so long as to be capable of moral action"; she read that "the heart of Man, after all abatements are made for certain innocent and amiable characteristics, is set to do evil in a most affecting and dreadful manner"; and that "the darling and customary pleasures of men furnish an

advantageous proof of the extreme depravity of our nature."

"Was I a very wicked little child?" she asked her mother one day.

"Wicked!" cried her mother, artlessly, resenting the thought. "You were like a little angel, Benigna, even from the very first. So was it that I gave you my sainted mother's name. Even your looks were all love; all saw it, and strangers too. You a bad child, indeed who never gave your mother a harsh word or a heart-ache since you were born!"

Anna Benigna, for so her mother called her, bent and kissed her mother, a rare caress in that family.

"I am glad I pleased you," she whispered. There were tears in her eyes, and as she walked without further word from the room, her mother perceived the significance of question and reply, and pondered long.

Then suddenly, as ice breaks up in the spring, and the freshet bears down everything before it, a moment of crisis and perception came, one of those moments which, albeit varying with each human experience, remains in each supreme.

Under all her outward conformity to law and love, Anna realized now that there had lain for years a deep, half-conscious resentment toward the Creator, a cold dislike of God. How could he look upon her with approval while such a disposition remained in her heart? She had loved the human; she had not loved the divine.

A sense of the absolute and eternal Good from which she was alienated, to which she was antagonistic, smote her with force. She now seemed to herself in the presence of God as a speck of dust against a dazzling mountain of snow — incalculably small, hatefully im-

pure. A passion of contrition and surrender mastered her; vague regenerating fires tried her soul; and then came an exhaustion of spirit, as of a child whom its Father has chastened, and who is reconciled and at peace. This succession of emotions she was able to recall distinctly as long as she lived.

This had been a month ago. Anna had recounted these spiritual exercises to her father, and he had told her that they denoted conversion, and advised her presenting herself to the church for admission. This she had done, but when he asked her, further, to what cause, if any, she ascribed this past sense of enmity against God, she had been silent.

However, her father was fully satisfied. Like a physician with a well-declared fever of a certain type, he felt it to be a clear case. Considering his child's blameless innocence of life, it was an unexpectedly satisfactory one from the theologian's point of view.

As she sat now in the warm gloom of the June night, with the dark trees murmuring softly under the wind, and the sky with many stars bending near, only the gable jutting above her head to keep its splendours off, Anna travelled back in thought to her childish days and found there the answer to her father's question.

CHAPTER III

Nay, but I think the whisper crept
Like growth through childhood. Work and play,
Things common to the course of day,
Awed thee with meanings unfulfill'd ;
And all through girlhood, something still'd
Thy senses like the birth of light,
When thou hast trimmed thy lamp at night
Or washed thy garments in the stream.

— Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Until her twelfth year Anna had not encountered the severities of Calvinistic theology, Samuel Mallison having intrusted the spiritual guidance of his children, during their earlier years, to their mother. Anna was the youngest child. Mrs. Mallison was of a German Moravian family who, coming from Pennsylvania, had settled on the eastern boundary of New York early in the century. She possessed the serene and trustful temperament of her people. The subtleties of her husband's religious system were beyond her simple ken ; she loved to sing the hymns of Zinzendorf, as she sewed and spun and ordered her household in true German *Hausfräulichkeit*, a sincere, devout, affectionate soul who had found the tone of the frigid little north New England community more chilling than she dared to own.

From her Anna inherited her warm impulses, her abounding delight in nature, her susceptibility to the simplest impressions of sweet and common things. Gulielma Mallison understood the child when she came running to her one early spring morning from

the parsonage garden, where the dark brown earth was freshly upturned and young green things were springing, and had tears in her eyes, veiling wonder, and a shy thrill of joy in all her small birdlike frame, and had asked, her hands clasped upon her breast: —

"Why am I so happy, mother, that I can't bear it? Why does something ache so here?"

"It is because thou art in God's beautiful world, little Benigna," the mother had said, "and thou art God's child. He is near thee, and thy heart yearns to him. Be glad in God."

In his study, through the open door, Samuel Mallison heard these words, and, whatever his perplexity as to their doctrinal inconsistency, he did not gainsay them. From his point of view at this time little Anna was entirely out of relation to God and out of harmony with his being, and it would have been impossible for her to please him. But just then an old question, which would not always down, had forced its way to his mind — What if there were a wrong link somewhere in the logic? What if the love of God were something greater than the schoolmen guessed?

But on a certain winter night Anna's childhood died, and the battle of her life began.

Well she remembered every physical sensation even, accompanying that experience.

It had been a snowy Saturday night, and she had come in from the warm kitchen where, in a round washing-day tub, drawn close to the hot stove, she had taken a merry, splashing bath, after the regular order of exercises for Saturday night at the parsonage. Her older sister, Lucia, had presided over the function, and when it was accomplished she had been closely wrapped in a pale

straw-hued, homespun flannel sheet, over her nightclothes, preparatory to facing the rigours of the bitterly cold hall and stairs, and the little bedroom above.

So she had trailed into the living-room, where the boys and her parents were gathered around a large table. The room was not very brightly lighted by the single oil lamp, but a great fire crackled loudly in the stove, and the rattle of the hard snowflakes on the window panes and the whistling of the wind outside gave keen emphasis to the sense of cheerful safety and comfort.

Warm and languid from the heat of her bath, Anna had sat down on a low seat and dropped her head on her mother's knees, feeling an indescribable sensation of happy lassitude and physical well-being. She recalled how interested she had been in the shrivelled whiteness of her own long, little fingers, and how soft and woolly that dear old blanket had felt; it was on her bed now, with her mother's maiden name worked in cross-stitch in one corner, in pale pink crewel.

They had been waiting for her, to proceed with the evening devotions, and her father had at once begun to read a part of a sermon from one of the standard divines who, though somewhat out of fashion in the centres of progressive thought, were still held infallible in these remoter regions.

The subject was "The Benevolence of God in Inflicting Punishment," from a work entitled "The Effects of the Fall."

Anna did not listen very closely for a time, but presently her attention was caught and held. The writer was seeking to prove that "the damnation of a large part of the human race directly subserved the general happiness of mankind and the glory of God." That

even if he had saved none of the sons of men, but "had left them to the endless torment they had so justly deserved," and "had glorified himself in their eternal ruin, they would have had no cause to complain." That the best of what were illusively known as "good works," were "no more than splendid sins." That no doubt, if any heathen could be found who was truly virtuous and holy, who loved God in the strictly evangelical sense, as infinitely great, wise, and holy, and who kept all his perfect law without infraction, such heathen might be saved. But as there was no evidence that any such heathen ever had existed, or ever could exist, there was no reason to believe that any had been saved. As the heathen still formed a vast proportion of the population of the globe, and as only a small fraction of those nations commonly known as Christian had actually and experimentally come under the law of grace, the only conclusion possible was, that a vast proportion of the human family throughout all ages and down to the present time "were serving the purposes of God's infinite wisdom and benevolence in their creation in endless misery or torment."

The triumphant logic of the old divine, which Mrs. Mallison secretly found discomfiting but accepted calmly enough considering its terrific import, and which her husband read with the sad and solemn pathos of one to whom it was a mournful verity, had a curious effect upon little Anna. For the first time the real meaning of familiar words like these smote full and sharp upon her mind, and in the physical lassitude of the moment acted like a bodily injury upon her. She grew whiter and whiter, and she touched and grasped the soft blanket about her with powerless fingers, to convince herself

that she could feel and find what was familiar, faintness being an absolutely unknown sensation.

Suddenly, with an imperious impulse, and a singular effect of childish courage which dared to do an unheard-of thing, she rose and said with perfect apparent composure, breaking in upon the reading: —

"I am too tired to stay here any longer, I am going upstairs now," and so left the room. Her mother had watched the slight figure in its close drapery with anxious eyes until the door closed upon her, but had not thought of following. This reading was a solemn function not to be lightly interrupted.

Upstairs, Anna had betaken herself hastily to bed, and lay there, motionless, somewhat alarmed at her own revolutionary action, and with little to say when questioned by her mother presently.

But when the house was still, and the night advancing to its mid depth of darkness, the child, still lying with wide, wakeful eyes, cried silently with a piteous consciousness of desolation and sorrow. A sense of the bitterness of a world where millions of helpless human spirits were shut up to endless agony had overwhelmed her, and a spirit of rebellion against God who willed it so for his own glory had taken intense possession of her thought.

In the passion of her childish resentment and grief and worn by the unwonted wakefulness, her breath came in long, quivering sobs which were heard in the next room, and brought her father to her side.

She could answer nothing to his questions, but he found her hands cold, and her pulse weak and rapid.

"You did not eat your supper to-night, little Anna," he said gently, remembering her faint appetite for the frugal fare of the parsonage table.

Anna only sobbed more convulsively. She had expected severity and blame, feeling verily guilty in spirit.

Samuel Mallison said nothing more, but Anna, wondering, heard him go downstairs, heard doors open and shut, and then silence fell again. Ten minutes later her father stood again by the bedside in the icy chill of the winter midnight in the unwarmed chamber, and he had brought a bowl of broth, hot and smoking, bread, too, and, most unwonted pampering, a piece of the rare pound-cake, kept for company and never given to children except on high holidays.

Neither of them spoke, but Samuel Mallison, for all the cold, sat on the bed's edge while Anna ate and drank, drawing her frail little body to rest against his own.

The broth was salted for Anna by her tears, and the long-drawn sobs, coming at intervals, half choked her as she ate, but she was comforted at last and fortified against the woe of the world, and she pressed her cheek against her father's arm with a sense of the infinite sweetness of fatherhood warm at her heart. As she finished the last crumb of cake, she thought: —

"If only God had been kind like my father! I was naughty, and that only makes him good to me and pitiful." But she said nothing, only looked with a world of wondering gratefulness in her large innocent eyes up into her father's face, finding some perplexity that cake and broth should reconcile her to the everlasting torment of the majority of mankind, but wisely concluding to make the best of it since such seemed to be the effect, and, as it was now undoubtedly high time, to go to sleep.

Finding her bright and well next morning, the Mallisons, father and mother, had thought little more of that

Saturday night revolt, which they, indeed, had not known as such; but, as she looked back over her years to-night, in her gable window, Anna perceived that from that time there had always been in the secret place of her heart a sense of enmity against a God who was not kind like her father. To-night she knew herself, at last, reconciled; faith had triumphed and declared that even the darkest decree of God's great will must be right, since he was the absolutely Good. But her heart yearned with mighty yearning for the subjects of his just wrath, and as she knelt in the darkness and silence she gave herself with simple, unreserved sincerity to the service of the lost among men.

Rising from her knees, Anna felt a strange glow and exaltation of spirit. In her own personal life sin had been met and vanquished. Tremendous apostolic assertions buoyed her soul upward like strong wings: "free from the law of sin and of death," "passed from death unto life," "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Thus she felt her finite linked to the infinite. Her spirit was suffused with thrilling and unspeakable joy; God was closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet.

But, as she stood rapt and absorbed, there came up through the hush of the night from the dim street below a strange sound, and she was caught back by it, and listened painfully. It was a little child crying piteously.

Peering down through the clustering branches, below her window, Anna could discern by the dim light of the stars the shape of a woman, forlorn and spiritless, passing silently along the shadowed way. Behind her followed the crying child, with weary little feet stumbling at every stone. The woman carried something in her

arms, hidden by an apron; she turned and looked at the child, and shook her head, but did not speak.

This woman, who moved abroad only at night, was the village outcast, and the child was her child, born in sin.

Vague and uncomprehended to Anna's mind was the abyss into which this woman had fallen, but she felt it to be black and bottomless, and to place an everlasting separation between her and the good. She drew back from the window, a sharp pain, made of pity and horror, at her heart, sin embodied thus confronting her. She felt as Sir Launfal felt when he saw the leper.

Lying down to rest at last, Anna slept, in spite of spiritual ecstasies and sufferings, the sound sleep of a healthy girl who is fortunate enough to forget the ultimate destinies of human souls, her own with the rest, for certain favoured hours.

It was long before her sleep was disturbed by dreams, but an hour before sunrise she awoke with a pervading sense of exquisite happiness brought over with her from a dream just dreamed. It was a still dream of seeing, not of doing. She had seen the form of a man of heroic aspect, old rather than young, with a grey head, leonine and majestic, strong stern features, a glance mild and yet searching and subduing; a man imperial and lofty, and above his fellows, but whether as king or saint or soldier she could not guess. But here was made visible a power, a freedom, and a greatness for which her own nature, she felt in a swift flash of self-revelation, passionately cried out, which it had nowhere found, and to which it bowed in a curious delight hitherto unknown. This only happened: this mysterious personality, more than human, she thought, if less

than divine, had looked kindly upon her, in her weak, childish abasement, and had shed into her eyes, and so into her heart, the impossible, inexplicable happiness with which she awoke. She did not sleep again. This waking consciousness enamoured her.

What did it mean? Anna asked herself all day. Was it a dream sent from God at this solemn hour of dedication? If so, what did it prefigure? Even at the sacramental feast, her first communion, that majestic head, with the controlling sweetness of the eyes upon her, came before her vision, and made her heart beat fast.

CHAPTER IV

The fiend that man harries
Is love of the Best.
— *The Sphynx*, R. W. Emerson.

Malvina Loveland, the girl whom Anna had found solace in forgiving for her childish offence, had "come out," as Haran people said, at the same time with Anna.

This fact, and the compunction in Anna's heart toward her early foe, had drawn the two girls together, and they became friends. They talked of the interests of the cause of religion, and read biographies together, or rather, Anna read aloud while her friend diligently produced lace work with a small shuttle, or hemstitched linen ruffles; but both cared less for these several occupations than for the sense of mingling their young, unfolding perceptions.

Anna had need of a friend; Lucia, her sister, was many years older, and had long ago married a farmer, and departed deeper into the hills, where she worked with the immoderate industry of New England women, bore many children, and lived a life into which Anna did not enter deeply. The Mallison boys were away from home, studying and working, and the parsonage was a silent place. Anna adored her father with the restrained ardour of her kind, and loved her mother with a great tenderness, but she was actively intimate with neither, and thus greatly alone.

Mally was noticeably pretty, and Anna thought her

beauty angelic. She was capable, clever, quick, and impulsive, one of the women who can do anything they see done, strongly imitative and impressionable. She developed rapidly, while Anna matured slowly. Anna had nobleness, Mally had facility. Anna, beside Mally, looked uncomfortably tall, with her angular thinness and her dark, grave face. She had masses of lustreless brown hair, a clear *brune* skin like her father, and, like him, singularly fine hands. Her eyes were her mother's, and her only beauty, — golden brown, and of limpid clearness.

To both these girls their religion was a system of prohibition and of an abnormal development of conscience. The negative, not the positive, side was uppermost to them. "Thou shalt not" was written over every device and desire which did not minister directly to the furtherance of the local conception of religion. Both were eager to grasp the positive side, to convert the world, to see Satan chained, and themselves to contribute to this desirable consummation; but they were doubtful how to begin. Both were ardent controversialists after the manner of their day, and Anna read systematic theology with her father with extraordinary relish.

They waited and wondered, each longing for her destiny to disclose itself decisively. But with Anna a hidden life budded beneath the surface, unknown even to Mally. The romantic and poetic impulses of her nature, no longer directly nourished by the poets whom she had put away from her by force, stirred in her heart, and fed themselves, in silence, on the life of nature, and on the delicate, evanescent imaginings of her awakening womanhood.

Below the surface of her conscious thoughts a strange inarticulate passion for power and freedom beat and throbbed, and would not be stilled, despite her quiet, conscientious conformity to the narrow conditions of the world about her. She did not know what freedom was, but she felt that she was not free; neither did she clearly know what the power meant for which she longed, but she felt the absence of it in every one she had ever met. It was mysterious, indefinable — once only had she encountered it, and that was in a dream.

Thus a nature simple and single, with all its forces apparently bent one way, and with few avenues, or none, by which to import conflicting influences, was, in fact, already incipiently subject to the complexities of instinct, of motive, and desire, which weave the bewildering network of human experience.

When Anna was twenty, an event occurred of much importance in its bearing on her life. Under the direction of an old friend of Samuel Mallison, the Rev. Dr. Durham of Boston, a general secretary for Foreign Missions, a series of meetings was held in Haran for the promotion of an interest in this cause. Dr. Durham was entertained, during the time of the convention, at the parsonage; he was a genial and kindly man, and became in his way an especial friend of Anna, in whom he manifested a marked interest.

From the country round about, during the week, men and women thronged to Haran; and at an evening meeting to be addressed by a woman who had been a missionary in India, the white meeting-house was filled. Many in the congregation had never seen a missionary; many more had never heard a woman speak in public. Curiosity ran high.

The speaker was a little sallow woman, in a plain and unbecoming grey gown, who stepped timidly to the edge of the platform, laying a small hand which trembled visibly on the cold mahogany pulpit, as if to conciliate it for her intrusion and to crave its support.

She spoke in a shrill crescendo, without the graces or arts of a skilled speaker, and she made no appeal to the emotions of the hearers. It was rather a dry and unimaginative account of the work done at an obscure mountain station, with statistics of no great impressiveness, and careful attention to accuracy of detail. But she had the advantage of sowing her seed on virgin soil. It was not important at that day and to those isolated and simple-minded people that the missionary should speak with enticing words, or attempt dramatic effect. She was herself there before them in flesh and blood, and no great time before she had been on heathen ground, had come into actual combat, face to face, with wild, savage men and strange, outlandish women, who knew not God, and who veritably and visibly bowed down to wood and stone.

For the hour, that little woman of weak bodily presence and commonplace intellect became the incarnation of Christianity seeking a lost world, and she herself was far greater to their thought than anything she could have said.

At the end of her report, for it was that rather than appeal or address, she told the story of a high-caste Hindu woman to whom she had sought to give the gospel message. This woman had turned upon her with grave wonder and had asked, "How long have you known this? about this Jesus?"

"Oh, for many years, all my life in fact."

"Then," said the woman, solemnly, "why did you not come to tell us before?"

Without comment or enlargement, having told of this occurrence, the speaker turned and walked shyly from the platform, leaving an unusual hush in the assembly, as if an event, a result of some sort, were waited for.

Toward the end of the church, where she was seated with her mother, Anna Mallison rose in her place, made her way out into the middle aisle, and then, with her head a little bent, but her face neither pale nor agitated, walked quietly to the foot of the platform. Samuel Mallison, who was seated with Dr. Durham behind the pulpit, rose and stood, just above, as if to receive her, looking down with solemn eyes. Some one who saw Anna's face said that, as she looked up into that of her father thus bent above her, the smile which suddenly illuminated it was beyond earthly beauty. It was a look in which two human spirits, and those father and child, purged as far as might be of earthliness, met in angelic interchange, pure and high.

Turning about, thus facing the great congregation, Anna, who had never before spoken in a public gathering of any sort, however small, said in a voice which was clear and distinct, though not loud: —

"I wish to offer myself to this society to go, if they will send me, to some heathen people, to tell them that Christ has died to save them. I am ready to go at once, if it is thought best."

The gravity and simplicity, and absence of self-consciousness, of the girl's words and bearing, and the profound sympathy of the people who saw and heard her, combined to produce an overpowering impression. As the meeting broke up, women were weeping all over

the house, and sturdy unemotional men were deeply moved.

Anna, seeing that many would surround her and speak their sympathy or give their praise, which she dreaded and feared to hear, turned with swift steps to the door nearest her, and so escaped into the outer darkness of the night, no one following.

But, as she hurried with light steps across the village green and reached the parsonage gate, she found Mally waiting to waylay her.

"Oh, Anna," she cried, and her tears flowed fast, "you will go away from me, from all of us! How can you put this great distance between us?"

"How can I do anything else, Mally?" Anna answered softly. "It is what I have been waiting for; I think I was never truly happy until to-night. All my life before I have been unsatisfied, and something has ached and hurt whenever I stopped to feel it."

"And to-night you are really happy?" cried her friend, half enviously, and yet by no means drawn to devote herself to the medley of crocodiles, dark-skinned babies, and cars of Juggernaut, which signified India to her mind.

"Oh, at last!" Anna exclaimed, and with a long breath of relief. "Will it not bring peace, Mally, to know that I am surely doing His will? It will be like pure sunshine after living in a fog these past years."

"Then weren't you really happy when you were converted and joined the church?" asked Mally, naïvely.

"Partly. But just to be happy because you are saved yourself — why, it does not last. And you know, dear, we could never find anybody's soul to work for here in Haran; at least, we didn't know how," and Anna be-

came silent, the vision of one solitary outcast coming before her, with whom she had been forbidden even to speak. But Mally refused to be comforted thus, and went her way with many tears.

There were more tears for Anna to encounter that night, for her mother came home broken-hearted. The Lord had answered her husband's daily prayer, and had graciously chosen one of their own family to preach the gospel to the heathen, and the answered prayer was more than the loving soul could sustain. Like Jacob, she could get no farther than the wail, "If I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

Not so Samuel Mallison. Too long had he schooled himself to the sacrifice of his dearest human and earthly desires. The long discipline of his life stood him now in good stead. Coming into the room where Anna was vainly seeking to comfort her mother, he laid his hands in blessing on her head, and with a look upward which stilled the weeping woman, he pronounced the ancient words : —

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

And yet Anna was the very apple of his eye. Of such fibre was the altruism of that rugged first growth.

CHAPTER V

Life ! life ! thou sea-fugue, writ from east to west,
Love, Love alone can pore
On thy dissolving score
Of harsh half-phrasings,
Blotted ere writ,
And double erasings
Of chords most fit.

— Sidney Lanier.

From the time of the missionary meeting and the announcement of his daughter's determination to devote herself to the service of Christ in a heathen land, Samuel Mallison's health declined rapidly. His *Nunc Dimittis* was of literal import, and prophetic.

Whether the death which all who loved him saw that he was soon to accomplish could be called dying of heart-break or dying of fulfilled desire, would have been hard to determine. Heart and flesh cried out against the separation from his best-beloved child, while the triumphant spirit blessed God for answered prayer, and for the fruition in that cherished life of his child of hopes and aspirations which had been but scantily fulfilled in his own.

"I have not been a successful man, Anna," he said to her one autumn day when they were alone in his study. He sat erect in his straight chair, but with an unmistakable languor in every line of face and frame, and with a feverish brightness in his prominent dark eyes.

Anna laid her hand upon his with endless gentleness.

"No man in Haran is so beloved, father. No man has done so much good."

"Perhaps," he answered sadly, "and I am satisfied. It is the will of God. Anna, I have seemed, perhaps, cold and silent, and without feeling as you have seen me; but the fire within has burned unceasingly, and I am consumed."

The last words were spoken lower and with an unconscious pathos which moved Anna unspeakably.

"I do not understand, father dear, not fully. Can you tell me all? I love you so."

They were the simplest words of the most natural affection, and yet it was the first time in her life that Anna had spoken after this sort to her father.

"My girl," he said simply, taking her hand within his own. Then, after a pause, he continued speaking.

"It is after this manner that life has gone with me. I believe I ought to retrace my past with you — for perhaps there may be light upon your path, if you know all. When I entered the ministry it was with sincerely right purpose; all the influences of my life pointed me in that direction, but it was, perhaps, more as an intellectual and congenial profession than from deeper reasons. I began my ministry, in 1841, in Boston. I was considered to have certain gifts which were valued in that day, and all went well, on the surface. But it was the period of a literary awakening in our nation, of which Boston was the centre of influence. An American literature was just becoming a visible reality, and a new impulse was at work and stirring everywhere. Men of original force were suddenly multiplied before us, and the contagion of intellectual ambition was felt in an altogether new degree. To me it became all-controlling. Transcendental phi-

losophy, Platonism, and classic learning acquired for me a supreme attraction, and I gave myself more and more to the study of them, and to the translation of Greek poetry. This had no unfavourable effect upon my preaching in the opinion of my congregation, rather the reverse, and I may say without vanity that I had reached comparatively early a certain eminence to which I was by no means indifferent."

Samuel Mallison paused a moment, while Anna silently reflected that this narrative would in the end explain the buried books of her dear old garret delight.

"Learning was young among us in those days, Anna," Samuel Mallison began again humbly, after a little space, "else this would not have happened; in the year 1848 I received a call to a professorship of the Greek language and literature in Harvard College."

Anna felt her own young blood rush to her cheeks in pride and wonder and amazement. To her little-village simplicity and scanty experience this seemed a surpassing distinction, and one which placed her father among the great men of the earth.

"The day after the mind of the authorities had been made known to me, was the day of my life which I remember best," Samuel Mallison continued.

"I went to my study that morning with a programme of what would take place somewhat definitely before my mind. I was about to seek, humbly and devoutly, an interview with God, in which I would lay before him this new and momentous opening in my life, and seek to have his will for me made clear. What this will would be, or what I should take it to be, was, just below the surface of my mind, a foregone conclusion. In fact, my letter of acceptance was substantially framed

in my mind already. I had never been favoured with voices and visions and revelations clear and conclusive in my religious experience, and I foresaw a decision based upon general reasonableness and preference, touched with a pleasant sense of the divine favour, which might naturally be expected to rest upon so congenial a course, and one so worthily justified by precedent. I read, as a preparatory exercise, with perfect satisfaction, the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel, then closed my Bible and knelt in prayer. This was exactly as I had foreseen — an orderly series of exercises befitting my position. But, oh; how mechanical, how cold, how barren! With such perfunctory practices I could think to take leave of the sacred calling of the ministry, so dead had my spirit grown to the claims of the blessed gospel, and its mission of salvation to a lost and perishing world!

"I knelt and thought to pray, but, like the king in 'Hamlet,' my words flew up, my thoughts remained below. Between me and Him whom I would have approached, interposed, like a palpable barrier, a solemn reiterated echo of words just read: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it.'

"I rose from my knees and walked up and down the room in great anxiety of spirit. This new work which I thought to undertake was educational, ennobling, necessary; in no way contrary to sound doctrine, in no way a betrayal of sacred responsibility; I was fitted for it by nature, by tastes, and attainments. Why was it opened to me? To mock me? to tempt? I could

not believe it, I had welcomed it as coming in the providence of God.

"But my heart-searching grew swift and deep, and it was given me to see the absoluteness, the finality, of the vows which I had assumed, from which I straightway realized that no argument of those with which I was equipped sufficed to release me. Feebly and imperfectly, yet sensibly, I began to grasp the import of what the apostle calls the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the being made conformable unto his death. Oh, the depth of the mystery hid in that saying! All these years I have sounded it — Anna, all these years I have died, in my own natural life — I have striven to give all I had to give, but the 'much fruit' — where has it been?"

An expression of pain, hardly less than agony, was impressed upon Samuel Mallison's face, and Anna hid her eyes, finding it too bitter to bear to see him suffer thus.

"I put it all away from me, then and there. Nothing was possible but for me to decline the invitation which had been given, you can see. Further, I saw that my studies had been my snare. My love of poetry and philosophy and learning, the prominence of my pulpit, the social and intellectual affinities I had formed, all had contributed to my spiritual deadness and decline. It was then that I put away in that box, now upstairs, the books which had particularly ministered to the tastes which had led me so far from the true conception of my life work. Never since that day have I allowed myself to follow the instinct for poetic expression. That longing had to be cut out, even if some life-blood flowed in the doing it. Henceforth, I wished to know nothing

but Christ, and him — Anna, do not fail to grasp this — him, not triumphant, but *crucified.* The offence of the cross to the natural spirit, how hardly can it be overcome! No child's play, no easy and harmonious growth in grace, has it been to me, but a conflict all the way. Your mother has a different type of religious life. Be thankful if her temperament shall prove to be yours.

"That is the story. I left my church not very long after and sought this rugged, remote section, because it offered hard work and a needy field, which some men shunned. Some years before I had met your mother, and we were married. Twenty years of my life and its best activity have been spent here in Haran. Those first few years and what made life to me in them I have looked upon as a false start. From that day, I sought only this one gift: an especial enduement of the Holy Spirit to give me power with men unto salvation. I desired this gift supremely, but I have not received it in any signal manner. My ministry has not been wholly unfruitful, but it has been lacking in the results for which I hoped; I have not had power with God and men, as have some of my more favoured brethren. The end is near now, very near, but I come with almost empty hands and a humbled, contrite heart to meet my Judge. But, my child, whatever the conflicts of the past years, the last thing which I could wish for to-day would be to have reversed that early decision. My life, from the merely human point of view, might, perhaps, on the line of intellectual effort have been counted successful, while as a minister of Christ it has not been so to any marked degree: but what is success, and what failure, when the things of time fade before our eyes?"

Samuel Mallison's head drooped upon one supporting

hand, and an expression of solemn musing rested on his face, while Anna's tears flowed fast.

"Just to do our own little day's work faithfully, not knowing what its part may be in the great whole, just to hold fast to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, and, having begun the race, to continue to the end — is not this enough?"

There was silence between them for some moments, and then the father said, making a sign to Anna to rise: —

"I want you to leave me now, dear child. I must rest. The one earthly hope to which I still cling is that to you may be given the reward of 'much fruit,' which I have failed to win. Remember this, if all the other teaching I have given you shall be forgotten in the years which are to try you, of what stuff you are made: *with greatness we have nothing at all to do; faithfulness only is our part.*"

Anna Mallison listened to these words with reverent sympathy and loving response, but the deeper meaning of them did not reveal itself to her, her time for perception being not yet fully come.

CHAPTER VI

O Joy, hast thou a shape?
Hast thou a breath?
How fillest thou the soundless air?
Tell me the pillars of thy house!
What rest they on? Do they escape
The victory of Death?

— H. H.

In the largest theatre of the New England city of Springfield on a night in December, an immense assembly of people was gathered. Every gallery was crowded to its utmost, and the house, from floor to roof, was a dense mass of human beings. On the stage were musical instruments, but the customary scenery was withdrawn, save that the background showed a Neapolitan villa situated on the slope of a Swiss mountain, at the base of which an ultramarine ocean heaved stormily. Against the incongruity of this unstable structure were massed several hundred men and women, and before them a musical leader, baton in hand. At an appointed signal the great chorus stood, and with them, at the gesture of a man, himself seated near the centre of the foreground of the stage, the whole audience, with a rushing sound like the sea or the wind, rose also.

Then there was sung by the chorus, with trained perfection, an old hymn, the words of which, as well as the melody, were of quaint and almost childish simplicity: —

"Alas, and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?

Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?
Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree."

With a swift motion of his baton the leader indicated that the whole assembly was to join in singing the refrain, in lowered voices. There followed in a deep murmur of a pathos quite indescribable: —

"Remember me, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me!
And when thou sittest on thy throne
Dear Lord, remember me."

At the close of this hymn many people in all parts of the house were in tears, but the hush of motionless silence following was complete, and the eyes of all were riveted upon that central figure on the stage, the man who now rose and, advancing to the front, began to address them.

This man was of majestic personal presence and his speech was with marked power. Thinly veiled under a manner of unusual restraint and quietness lay a genius for emotional appeal and for persuasion. There was in his manner and speech an utter absence of excitability, and yet a quality which excited; a capacity for impassioned eloquence, apparently controlled and held back by the speaker's will. The congregation listened with absorbed attention.

At the close of the address, which was designed to move all the impenitent or irresolute persons present to an immediate confession of their need of a Saviour, the speaker asked those of this class who were present and

were so inclined to advance and take certain seats, directly in front of the stage, which had been reserved for them.

A close observer would have been interested in watching the man as this part of the evening's work was ushered in. The restrained intensity of his manner was noticeably augmented; his eyes moved slowly and searchingly from one part of the house to another with a gaze which no trifler and no awakened soul might escape. The expression of his face was sternly solemn, even tragical, as of one undergoing an actual travail of spirit. He stood absolutely motionless save for a single and significant gesture of his right hand, an upward gesture made with peculiar slowness and with dramatic effect. It was at once entreating, subduing, and commanding.

At the first moment no person stirred; but presently, as if drawn by an irresistible magnetism, a stream of men and women could be seen advancing down the various aisles, with fixed look, pallid faces, and sometimes with tears. Upon such the speaker bent a look of gentleness and encouragement, in which his features would be momentarily relaxed, only to resume the profound solemnity already spoken of, as he lifted his eyes again to the unmoved masses still confronting him.

The chorus, without rising, now chanted softly the words of vivid appeal: —

> "Why not to-night? Why not to-night?
> Thou wouldst be saved, why not to-night?"

Many moments passed. The company of seekers now numbered a hundred. Beneath the absolute outward restraint which held all, an inner excitement grew steadily in intensity, and the subtle contagion of "the

crowd" assumed an irresistible sway. It might have become alarming. It possessed elements of terror just below the surface. A climax was reached when a man of gigantic frame and brutalized features, in the upper gallery, stepped forward, and with a gesture rude and almost wild, flung out his arms toward the evangelist, and called through the silence of the place: —

"I give in — you knew I'd have to. Yes, I'm comin'." And then, turning, clattered down the bare gallery stairs, only to reappear presently below, with his coarse head bent and big tears flowing down his purple cheeks.

Gradually the stream of seekers abated, and the aisles became empty. Thus far no word of appeal or warning had been added to the sermon; save for the restrained monotony of the music this extraordinary scene had taken place in complete silence.

Then the speaker's voice was heard again, and in it was a strange emotional quality which had been previously unnoticed, and before which the pride and will of many melted within them.

"The people of this company are dismissed to their homes," he said, in gentle, measured tones; "my work now is for those who have feared God rather than men. They will remain. Let all others go without unnecessary delay, or stopping for speech with one another. The Spirit is here."

The benediction followed, but as they broke up, scores hitherto irresolute turned and joined the company of seekers in the front of the house.

When the speaker, the house being otherwise emptied, came down to the anxious and disquieted little company waiting for his guidance, he stood before them

in silence for a little space, and then, turning to a group of clergymen who were associated with him, he said: —

"Pardon me, but I believe I will leave these friends in your hands, brethren. I wish to return immediately to my lodging," and saying nothing further in explanation or apology, he departed, with evident haste.

When he reached the lobby of the theatre he found three men watching who hastened toward him, their spokesman, with outstretched hand, introducing himself and his companions and adding, with eager cordiality: —

"This is so much better than we expected. We were prepared to wait for you some time."

The man received the greeting gravely, and, indeed, silently.

"Will you come with us now to our hotel? We wish to confer with you. We have come from New York for that purpose."

"Will you not let me know what you wish here, at once?" was the rejoinder. "I am in some haste."

"Certainly, certainly, if you prefer it," said the other, cheerfully, hiding a shade of discomfiture. Then, with a change to serious emphasis, he proceeded: "We want you to undertake a work in New York this winter, as soon as possible, in fact. A large group of prominent churches is ready to unite in the movement, and unlimited resources will be placed at your disposal. Your own compensation, pardon me for alluding to it, will be anything you will name — that is a matter of indifference to the committee, save that it be large enough. We are ready to build you a tabernacle two hundred feet square, — larger if you like."

The man addressed involuntarily laid his hand on his breast; a letter in the pocket under his hand, from Chi-

cago, specified a tabernacle three hundred feet square. He smiled slightly; even religious zeal was a size larger in Chicago than elsewhere.

Further details were mentioned, but the evangelist seemed to give them a forced and mechanical attention. Then, rather suddenly, he broke in with a word of apology.

"I am fully sensible, gentlemen," he went on, "of the confidence you have manifested in me, and I would, under other conditions, have accepted your proposition. But the very circumstance of your making it to-night hastens an action on my part which I have been approaching, but had not, until now, definitely determined upon. I am about to withdraw from this work, and can form no engagements, however promising. I shall close the meetings here as soon as I can honourably do so, and these meetings are, for the present certainly, my last."

The blank faces of the three men before him seemed to demand a word or two more.

"My reasons?" he asked with curt and almost chilling brevity. "Pardon me. They are personal to myself. Good evening. No one can regret your disappointment more than I." With these words the speaker turned abruptly from the little group and left the theatre. In great amazement and perplexity the committee of three presently followed his example.

Here was an accredited and earnest man, no irresponsible religious tramp, who possessed, apparently in a superlative degree, the gift of winning souls for which Samuel Mallison had given his all, if in vain, and for lack of which he might fairly be said to be dying, being one who could have lived on spiritual joy, if such had ever been his portion. And this man, possessing this

coveted and crowning religious endowment, was deliberately putting it aside, and refusing to use it. What did it signify?

* * * * * *

Anna Mallison had left Haran, in its ice-bound valley, early that morning, and, by travelling through snowdrifts in a sleigh all the forenoon, had been favoured to get as far as Springfield on her journey, at nine o'clock of that same evening. She was bound for Boston, where she was to go before the missionary board to be examined as to her fitness and promise for a worker on the "foreign field."

At the Springfield station Anna had been met by the little missionary lady whom she had heard and met in Haran on her night of great decision. By her she had been conducted to a hotel, shown to a room, affectionately if reticently counselled, and then left to sleep and be ready for another early start on the following morning. It was the first time Anna had ever been in a city, and she was bewildered by the noise and lights in the streets through which she had been hurriedly driven.

Left alone, she looked about her at the stiff order of the narrow hotel chamber, the first she had ever inhabited, the showy, shabby carpet, the cheap carvings of the furniture, the long mirror in which she herself stood, still and dreary, and a rushing wave of heart-sickness swept over her. Her anxiety for her father became suddenly poignant; a sense of the sadness of his life tore her heart with fierce pain: she realized now, as she had failed to before, how fast his strength declined. She longed to know how that moment fared with him, and how the next would. A wild purpose seized her

to return the next morning to Haran, and let all other purposes go until some later time.

However, in spite of all this anxiety and doubt, Anna's physical weariness was sufficient to bring sleep apace, when once her head was on the pillow, and all the distant murmur of the city and the sudden, uncomprehended noises of the great house were soon lost to her. Thus she failed to hear a man who entered the room next to hers within the same hour, who closed the door with some emphasis and locked it fast; who, after that, walked up and down within the narrow limits of that room with uniform, slow step, and who continued to do this until the December dawn filtered through the dim windows. All was still in that next room when Anna awoke. The anxiety and homesickness of the night before were gone, and in their place was that mysterious joy which once before on a June night had strangely visited her. Again, in her dream, she had seen the face which ever since had dominated her; as before, it was majestic, free, and strong. As before, it had bent to her, —

"Bent down and smiled."

She rose hastily, glad and awed and greatly wondering. At six o'clock she was ready and went down to the great dining-hall, dark save for the wan light of a single gas jet under which she sat down, silent and alone, and was served by a heavy-eyed, untidy man-servant, with an indifferent breakfast. She swallowed a few mouthfuls by force of will, then gathered up her humble belongings, and started out alone into the icy chill of the grey morning. It was too early for her friend from the Orient to brave the rigours of the un-

accustomed winter. It was all comfortless, dreary, and inauspicious; small cheer for a young girl starting on such an errand, but there was no sinking now of her spirit. She walked to the Springfield station in the light and warmth of that inexplicable radiance of her dream, and so pursued her journey to Boston.

FROM ANNA MALLISON'S NOTE-BOOK

Do you believe in the mutual penetration of mind? Do you believe that, independent of word and voice, independent of distance, from one end of the world to the other, minds can influence and penetrate one another? . . . Do you not know a soul can feel within it another soul which touches it?

— Père Gratry.

January 28, 1870. — A week to-day since my father was buried. It is late at night, and I have come up to my little roof room, but I cannot sleep. I have been with my mother, and we have cried together, until she sleeps at last, so tired, and her dear face changed so sadly that, as she slept, I was almost afraid. And yet she is greatly upheld, and as gentle and uncomplaining as it is possible to be.

But for me, knowing my father, and trying to find the meaning of his life, these days give me less grief than wonder and perplexity. For a time after my father told me the story of his past, after I knew what he might have been, knew his great renunciation, his utter humility, his leaving all to seek one only thing, and that a gift for others, and even that being denied him, so that to himself his life seemed a failure, and its supreme sacrifice unsanctioned and unblessed — after

this I could hardly bear the heart-break of it all. So pure, so blameless, so devoted a life, and yet, to his own thought, so unfruitful. Just a narrow little village church, with its narrow little victories and defeats, and its monotony of spiritual ebb and flow — this was the sum of his achievement. Was it not hard of God? This he would not have said, but my undisciplined heart has cried out in bitterness and rebellion. I have been in deep doubt and darkness.

To-night it is given me to see it all in light, and I am reconciled. The word which changed my father's life was that great word of the Master, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth alone." That dying, the utterness of it, was what we did not comprehend. I think my father understood before he left us, although he could not express it. But all along he had felt that in dying in his own personal life to the world and to his ambition, he was meeting the condition, and that in his own personal life the fruits of that death were to be manifest, that he should be set for the salvation of many. But God sees not with our short vision. Days with him are years, and years days; and our whole life but a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

This has come to me: My father's sacrifice has borne in the life of one of his children, if not in all, the fruit of an especial dedication of that life to the service of God. If he had not been the man he was, if he had not laid down his life daily and hourly in humble self-surrender to the Divine Will, never, never should I have dreamed of giving myself to the work to which I am now pledged. His life, in its deepest working, had been wrought into mine, so that unconsciously I willed to be

what he would have willed to have me. So, then, it is no more I alone, but the spirit, the will, the nature of my father that worketh in me.

The God of my father — this phrase, so common, so almost commonplace before, has suddenly taken to itself an extraordinary significance. My father's God, my God, who began in my father's willing sacrifice of all the noblest powers of his manhood his purpose of grace, will now, in his good pleasure, carry on the one work, the same so begun, through me, all unworthy as I am, timid, trembling, but a child. A child, and yet called with this high calling; child of a saint, called solemnly, sacredly, in the very depths of my being, deeper than I feel, higher than I know, to be my father's child, to be the continuance, the fulfilment of his dying life, to finish what he began, to bring to fruitage the seed he died to sow. How sublime, how sweet, how awful the vocation wherewith I am called!

Then look upon me, O my God, my father's God! Behold my weakness; raise it into power; turn my dull mind to light, my hard and narrow heart to a flame of love; make me thy minister, thy messenger, fulfil in me all thy great will.

February 20. — To-night I am alone in the old home, not *our* home any more. It is stripped already of all that made it home, but, bare and grim as it is, I love it, and leave it with a sorrow my heart is yet too tired to realize. They have consented to let me sleep this one last night in my own little room. This poor bed is to be left, being not worth removing, and all that clothes it goes with me. So, like a pilgrim, under a tent roof for a single night, I lie alone, and look up beyond the dear old gable and see the winter stars.

They shine upon his grave, and the snow already has drifted over it, and my heart bleeds. Why will they not let us pray for our dead as the Romish people do? Oh, kind little father, gone what dim, dazzling way I do not know, will they let you be happy at last? Will God let you *see why?*

February 21. — It was a strange night, and yet most beautiful.

I hardly slept, but prayed until nearly dawn. Then I slept a short time, and woke to find my limbs racked with pain from the bitter chill of the room, and tears running down my face. Almost as if I were carrying out an order given me in my sleep, I hurried on my clothing, and, taking my candle, came down the stairs, both flights, through the empty, echoing house, to the rooms below. I was so cold that I shook from head to foot. Then I found in the kitchen wood left from our store, and I brought it into the east room, the parlour, where we laid my father after his death, and where I had sat beside his dear form each night. The great fireplace was bare and empty, like the room, but the andirons were left.

I laid the wood across and started the fire, and it blazed and gave light, and threw strange shadows about the room, and I kneeled beside it, on the hearth, as I used sometimes when I was a little child, and warmed my hands, and still I cried, and there was no one to comfort me.

Mally says she would have been afraid — in that room. I cannot understand. It is because her dearest have not died. What of him could have been anything but precious? To have felt his spirit near me! That would indeed have been holy consolation.

But what if that were true? I do not know. While I so crouched in the chimney corner, my heart bleeding, and the tears bathing my poor face, there was a soft touch, lighter than the flight of a thistledown, passing over my head, as if the gentlest hand God himself could make gentle had smoothed my hair, and sought to comfort me.

Then some one said: "I came here to be with you." But I do not know whether it was I who so said in my own heart, or whether the words were spoken to my ear. I only know that I was comforted, and the fire warmed my aching limbs, and my head drooped against the wall, and I slept with long sobs, as I slept once when I was a child, and my dear father ministered to me.

It was broad daylight when I awoke, and I felt soothed and strong. I rose to go and make ready to lock and leave the house. But first I knelt and prayed, and I am praying still.

Live in me, O God, as my father lives in me, and as thou didst live in him. Let me live the life and die the death which he sought to live, to die, for thee. Give thou unto him through me abiding fruit in the salvation of souls; and grant us such grace as that we may humbly and worthily fulfil thy gracious will, I on earth, as he in heaven.

CHAPTER VII

She [Dorothea] could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in gimp, and artificial protrusions of drapery.— *Middlemarch*, GEORGE ELIOT.

A SMALL house in a small street of a small provincial city. A faded brown house with its front door directly on the street, the steps jutting into the sidewalk. A narrow strip of yard overlaid with grimy snow separated this house from others on either side, equally unnotable and uninteresting, the dwellings of mechanics and small tradesmen.

It was the close of a rough March day, the wind had not died with sunsetting, and a thin, piercing rain, colder than snow, was driven before it into the very teeth of the few passers-by.

A tall woman, in a straight black dress with a dyed black shawl drawn tightly around her shoulders, was making her way down the street dead against the wind, which beat her hair out into wet strands and bound her skirts hard about the slender long limbs. She made no useless attempt to hold an umbrella; in fact, she carried none, but was heavily burdened with four or five large books. She was girlish in figure after a severe sort, her step steady, her movement without impatience or fluttering, in spite of the struggle with the wind. Seeing her face, the absorbedness of sorrow in it was profound enough to explain indifference to sharper buffetings than those of the wind. It was Anna Mallison.

When she reached the house she deposited her books on the icy step and drew from her pocket with stiffened, aching fingers a key with which she unlocked the door. The house was unlighted, and its close, airless precincts apparently empty.

Stooping, Anna gathered her books again and closed the door, then groped her way to a steep staircase, a weary sigh escaping her as if in spite of herself. The room which she entered, silent and dark at her coming, showed itself, when she had lighted a lamp, a low but spacious living room, stiffly and even meagrely furnished. Opening beyond it was a smaller bedroom.

Having laid aside shawl and bonnet, Anna made preparation for a simple evening meal for two persons. Not until these were made did she stop to realize that she was chilled and that her shoes were wet through. Characteristically it was of the shoes she took cognizance rather than of her feet — circumstances having thus far led her to regard health as an easier thing to acquire than food and raiment.

There was a sudden outburst now, from below, of merry voices, both a man's voice and a girl's, in loud and cheerful banter, then the house door shut with a bang, there was a quick step on the stairs, and a gay, fluttering, wind-blown figure of a pretty girl appeared in the upper sitting room. It was Mally Loveland, Anna's early Haran friend and companion.

"Holloa, Anna!" she called lightly, "lucky for me you got in first! A fire is a good thing, I tell you, on a night like this." Mally's voice had acquired a new ring of self-confident vivacity.

"You're a little late, Mally," remarked Anna, quietly, as she returned to the room. "Shall I make tea?"

"Oh, yes, do; there's a dear. Oh, such fun as we've been having at the Allens'! But I'm so chilly and damp, you know; and just look, Anna, at the ribbons on my hat." Mally held up to view a pretentious structure of ribbon and velvet which had plainly suffered many things of the elements.

"Too bad. I hope you won't go out again to-night, your cold was so bad yesterday. It is a wretched night."

"Oh, I must go out, my dear — must indeed! Couldn't disappoint the girls, you know."

"Nor even the boys?" asked Anna smiling.

Mally laughed at this, evidently pleased. In a few moments she was ready and they took their places at the tea-table, Mally quieting herself with an effort, in order to ask a brief blessing upon the meal. It was her turn to-night. The two coöperated in their religious exercises of a general character, as well as in their housekeeping.

Destiny, so eagerly challenged by these two village girls in the eventless isolation of their life in Haran, seemed at last to have declared itself decisively: both were to catch men, — Anna in the apostolic sense, Mally in a different one.

Anna's journey to Boston, three months earlier, had been successful. She had returned under appointment as a missionary to India; but being still too young to go out, the Board had advised her to spend the following two years in studies especially designed to develop her usefulness in work among the heathen. In January Samuel Mallison had died. The parsonage, where the children had been born and nurtured, could thus no longer be their home. It must be made ready now for a successor.

It had been a sorrowful breaking up, and when the melancholy work was done, and the home effaced forever, the mother, patient and uncomplaining, departed with Lucia to the lonely farmhouse among the hills, to take on again, in her later years of life, the many cares of tending little children. It was then that Anna, accompanied by her friend Mally, had come to Burlington with the purpose of studying at a collegiate institute, which offered opportunity for more advanced study than could be had in Haran. Anna was hard at work every morning on Paley's "Evidences" and Butler's "Analogy," while her afternoons were spent in the small hospital of the town, in an informal nurses' class, as it was even then considered a useful thing for missionaries to go out with some equipment for healing the bodies of men as well as their souls. Mally, by her own account, was "taking" music, painting, and French.

As they sat at their little table now, with its meagre and humble fare, but its indefinable expression of refinement, Anna and Mally were in striking contrast.

It has been said before that Anna matured slowly. There was still in her face, despite its sadness, the grave wonder, the artless simplicity, and the sweet unconsciousness of a child. Her figure was angular and undeveloped; her black dress, absolutely, harshly plain, and of coarse stuff; her face, far too thin and colourless for beauty. She was, plainly, underfed and overworked; but there was, nevertheless, a dignity and a distinction in her aspect which emphasized Mally's provincialness, notwithstanding the little fashionable touches about dress and coiffure which the latter had swiftly and instinctively adapted to her own use.

Anna had the repose of a person who is not con-

cerned at all as to the impression she makes, or desirous of making any personal impression whatever. Mally had the restlessness, the vivacity, the eagerness, of a woman who wishes everywhere and at every time to make herself felt, to be the central figure. She was born an egotist, and even "divine grace," in the devotional phraseology of that time, had not been sufficient to overcome her natural bent. At the present time, in fact, egotism was having comparatively easy work with her, and an indefinite truce with the religious conflicts of earlier days had been tacitly declared. That spiritual experience had been sincere, and it had lasted several years. Fortunately, to Mally's unspoken thought, she had been favoured during those years to work out her salvation, which was now, according to a prime doctrine of the church, secured to her against all accidents. This being so, no one need be concerned for her; and if she were herself satisfied with a low spiritual attainment, it was nobody's business but her own.

She had, to her own naïve surprise, met with a marked degree of social success in a certain middle-class stratum of the small town. She was pretty, clever, adaptive; the young men and women of her set said she was "such good company." This was high praise. In Haran the natural order for a marriageable girl was to be soberly and decorously and protractedly wooed by one young man, to whom, in process of time, she was married. Here Mally found a far more stimulating social condition. Not one man, but many, might be the portion of a popular girl, and Mally found the strength of numbers very great. The sex instinct, the ruling desire to attract men, sprang into vigorous action, and became, for a time at least, predominant. Women of whom this is true

are often very good women, with energy and common sense, but it is important for their friends, for various reasons, to hold the master key to their character.

Anna Mallison, at this period of her life as sexless in her conscious life as a star, looked on at this rapid and unlooked-for development of Mally's nature in infinite perplexity. She had always liked certain men, even outside her own kindred, but it was because they were wise or good or sincere, not because they were men. A thirst for admiration being thus far undeclared in her own life, Mally became inexplicable to her; she did not hold the key to her character, and involuntarily she withdrew more and more into herself, her only friend becoming thus uncomprehended. If she felt this in any degree, Mally, being closely occupied with more tangible consideration, paid small heed to it.

While they were taking tea, Anna kept her eyes fixed on the mantel clock, and, having eaten hastily, rose from her place.

"What is the matter?" asked Mally, looking up. "Oh, of course; but, dear me, Anna, I never would bother to get things ready for old Marm Wilson, after the way she grumbles at you. Sit down, do. You'll never get any thanks, I can tell you that; and what's the use?"

Anna was at the door already. "I think it's late enough now to be safe. She only grumbles, you know, if the oil and wood burn out awhile before she gets here. She was to work quite near on Hill Street, to-day, so she will surely be in early."

"Oh, well, go on if you've a mind to. I suppose it is forlorn on a night like this for the poor old creature to find her house all dark and cold," Mally spoke carelessly, half to herself. Anna was already half-way downstairs.

Mrs. Wilson was their houseowner, a seamstress of narrow means and narrower life whose upper rooms they rented.

An hour later the upper sitting room was suddenly enlivened and almost filled, as far as seating capacity was concerned, by a group of Mally's friends, who had come to escort her to an evening gathering. These young men and maidens, whom Anna had scarcely seen before, seemed to explain the new Mally to her, and to place her at a different angle, as one of a class, not one by herself. The girls all wore a profusion of ribbons and curls, and were all in an effervescence of noisy excitement regarding the effect of the dampness on their hair and their finery; they whispered and giggled together, and pouted at the young men, or tossed their heads and assumed exaggerated airs of being shocked at the personal remarks which these attendants volunteered, and with which they were, in fact, palpably delighted.

Anna, who attempted some quiet civilities from time to time, was regarded with undisguised indifference, as not being "one of the set."

After the young people had left the house, however, Mally's companion on their expedition, a young man somewhat above the others in intelligence, said to her: —

"What an unusual girl that friend of yours, that Miss Mallison, is. I never met any one just like her. She strikes me as a girl who would keep a fellow at a mighty distance; but if she ever did care for him, he wouldn't mind dying for her, you know, and all that sort of thing. But she isn't one of the kind you like to play games with."

CHAPTER VIII

She was a queen of noble Nature's crowning,
A smile of hers was like an act of grace;
She had no winsome looks, no pretty frowning,
Like daily beauties of the vulgar race;
But, if she smiled, a light was on her face,
A clear, cool kindliness, a lunar beam
Of peaceful radiance.

— Hartley Coleridge.

To the surprise of both the friends, Anna, who had gone about her rigorous tasks unseen and unnoted hitherto, began about this time to come into a certain comparative prominence in the quiet little city.

A day or two after the evening described in the last chapter, Anna received a note from Mrs. Ingraham, the wife of a distinguished citizen of the town, a man of great wealth, and a well-known senator. The Ingrahams were, perhaps, the most highly placed family in the little town, by right of distinguished antecedents, of wealth, and of habit of life. They belonged to that singularly privileged class, which Anna Mallison had not hitherto encountered, who have both will and power to appropriate the most select of all things which minister to the individual development, whether things material, things intellectual, or things spiritual. Thus Mrs. Ingraham and her daughters were women of fashion, prominent figures at the state functions of their own state, and well known in the inner circles of Washington society. They dressed superlatively well in clothes that came from Paris. At the same time

they were as much at home among literary as among fashionable folk, and Mrs. Ingraham at least was understood to be devotedly religious, with an especial penchant for foreign missions. In fine, all things were theirs.

Thus it was an event for Anna Mallison, in her dull, low-ceiled upper room, to open and read the note of Mrs. Senator Ingraham to herself, — a note written in graceful, flowing hand, on sumptuous, ivorylike paper, squarely folded, with a crest on the seal, and the faintest suggestion of violets escaping almost before perceived. The note was delicately courteous, a marvel of gracious tact. Mrs. Ingraham had heard through a friend that Miss Mallison was under appointment as a missionary to India, and had sincerely wished to meet her. On Friday evening a dear Christian worker from Boston, now her guest, was to hold a little parlour meeting at the house for the help and encouragement of friends who were interested in a higher Christian life. Would not Miss Mallison give them all the pleasure of making one of that number? Mrs. Ingraham would esteem it a personal favour; and if Miss Mallison felt that she could tell the little company something of the experience she had had in being led into this beautiful life-work, it would be most acceptable. However, this was by no means urged, but merely suggested and left entirely to Miss Mallison's preference.

The man who had brought the note waited on the narrow walk below for Anna's answer. He wore a sober but handsome livery.

This was the first invitation of the kind which Anna had received, but she had now somewhat accustomed herself, by the advice of the Board, to speaking in

women's missionary meetings, and it seemed to her right to say yes. Accordingly, on untinted note-paper of a very common grade, she said yes in a natural and simple way, and made haste to give the note to the man at the door below, whom she felt distressed to keep waiting.

This man removed his shining hat in respectful acknowledgment as he took the note, and told Anna that Mrs. Ingraham had asked him to say, having forgotten to mention it in her note, that in case Miss Mallison would be so kind as to come, Mrs. Ingraham would send the carriage for her at half-past seven on Friday evening.

Anna felt that she ought to deprecate so much attention, and timidly attempted to do so; but the man plainly was not further empowered to treat in the matter, and, bowing respectfully, departed with Anna's pallid, long and narrow envelope in his well-gloved hand.

When Mally came in, Anna handed her Mrs. Ingraham's note. Mally's face flushed noticeably as she read it. It was not easy for her to have her quiet friend thus preferred.

"You'll go, of course?" she commented rather coldly, as she handed it back.

"Yes."

"I should think you would by all means. Who wouldn't? I've heard lots about Mrs. Ingraham; she believes in a very high religious life, you know, and those rich higher-life people live high, I can tell you. There'll be a supper, depend on that, and it will be a fine one."

"Oh, I don't think there will be anything of that kind," interposed Anna, hastily.

"You see!" cried Mally, with an air of superior

wisdom and wide social experience. "Oh my! if I should tell you all I've heard about those Ingrahams, you'd be surprised. One night they have a prayer-meeting and the next night a dance. It's all right, I suppose. Kind of new, that's all."

On the following evening, when the luxurious Ingraham carriage was driven up before Mrs. Wilson's poor little house, many eyes peered narrowly from neighbours' windows to catch the unwonted sight; and Anna, slipping hastily out of the Wilson door, felt an access of humility in this exaltation of herself, for such she knew it seemed to her neighbours, transient though it was. She had suffered a guilty and apologetic consciousness all day toward Mally, who had treated her with a slight coolness and indifference, which afflicted Anna keenly.

When Anna entered the hall of the Ingraham house, a small, stout woman, in a brown dress and smooth hair, came out to greet her, and took her hand between both her own, which were white and soft and heavily weighted with diamonds. Anna found the diamonds confusing, but she knew the hands were kind. Mrs. Ingraham's manner, of sincere kindliness and dignity, put Anna wholly at her ease, and she looked about her, presently, at the subdued luxury and elegance of her surroundings with a frank, childlike pleasure. Her absolute unconsciousness of herself saved Anna from the awkwardness which her unusual height, her angular thinness, and her unaccustomedness to social contact might otherwise have produced. She wore her "other dress," which was of plain black poplin, but quite new, and not ungraceful in its straight untortured lines; and as she entered the great drawing-room, with its splendours of costly art, and met

the eyes of many people who were watching her entrance, the quiet gravity and simplicity of her bearing were hardly less than grace.

Two women, dressed with elegance and apparently not deeply touched with religiousness, commented apart a little later, having met and spoken in turn with the lady from Boston and the young missionary elect.

"What do you think of Mrs. Ingraham's new saints?" asked one, whose black dress was heavily studded with jet ornaments.

"I like the young missionary better than the Bostonian, myself," was the reply. The speaker had red hair and an exquisite figure. "Isn't she curious, though?" she continued. "Manners, you know, but absolutely no manner! I never encountered a woman before, even at her age, who positively had *none*."

"That is what ails her, isn't it?" returned her beaded friend. "You've just hit it. And you can see that tremendously developed missionary conscience of hers in every line of her face and figure, don't you know you can?"

"Figure, my dear? She has none. I never saw such an utter absence of the superfluous!"

Here they both laughed clandestinely behind their laced handkerchiefs.

"Do you know how I should describe that girl?" challenged the Titian beauty, recovering.

"Cleverly, without doubt."

"I should call her a scaffolding over a conscience."

"That is really very good, Evelyn. You can see that she is not even consciously a woman yet. She knows nothing of life or of herself or of this goodly frame, the earth, save what that New England con-

science of hers has interpreted to her. Her horizon is as narrow as her chest."

"Poor thing. How will she bear life, I wonder!" and the words died into a whisper, for at that moment the little talking, moving groups of men and women were called to take the chairs, which had been arranged in comfortable order, and give attention to what was to follow.

CHAPTER IX

When the soul, growing clearer,
Sees God no nearer;
When the soul, mounting higher,
To God comes no nigher;
But the arch-fiend Pride
Mounts at her side,
And, when she fain would soar,
Makes idols to adore,
Changing the pure emotion
Of her high devotion
To a skin-deep sense
Of her own eloquence;
Strong to deceive, strong to enslave —
Save, oh! save.

— Matthew Arnold.

Anna was the first to speak. When she rose and faced the little audience, made up of fashionable women, professional men, and a sprinkling of the more clearly defined religious "workers," she did not feel the coldness underlying their courteous attention. The Titian beauty fixed upon her eyes full of unconsciously patronizing kindness, and Mrs. Ingraham smiled at her with sympathetic encouragement, but they might have spared themselves the effort. Anna did not perceive or consider these things. She was not thinking of them at all, nor of herself.

The peculiar twofold consecration which rested upon her spirit in regard to her missionary vocation, as a call to fulfil at once the Divine Will and the will of her father, was so profound and so solemn as to remove

her from personal and passing cares. She would not herself have chosen to appear before these people and to speak to them of her supreme interest; but to do so had been laid upon her as duty, and Anna's conception of duty, by reason of the "tremendously developed conscience" which the worldly-wise women had discerned in her, was of something to be done. She did this duty with the simple directness of a soldier under command. She stood erect and motionless, with no nervous working of hands or trembling of lips, and spoke in a clear, low voice, in which alone, by reason of a peculiar vibrant pathos, the profound, undeclared passion of her nature was suggested.

Her critics of the early evening had been right in finding her destitute of manner. There was no slightest evidence as she spoke of the orator's instinct — the magnetism of kindling eye and changing expression, of the conciliation and subtle flattery of her hearers. Neither had she fervid personal raptures nor spiritual triumphs to communicate. Of the picturesque and pathetic elements of the situation she made no use whatever. She had simply an absolute, dominating conviction that the heathen were lost; that they could only be saved by the knowledge of Christ; that this knowledge must be conveyed to them by the disciples of Christ at his command; and that she, Anna Mallison, was humbly grateful that she was permitted to devote herself to a service so obviously necessary. Of these things she spoke; of the sacred sense of living out her father's disappointed life she naturally could not speak.

It was not the speech which Mrs. Ingraham and her guests had expected. They had looked to have their sympathies aroused by a pathetic recital of sacrifice and

exalted self-devotion. Anna, on the contrary, was unconscious of sacrifice, and felt herself simply grateful for the privilege of carrying out her innermost desires.

The people who heard her felt that to give up "the world" was a mighty thing. Anna did not yet know what "the world" was. To their anticipation, she had been a figure almost as romantic and moving as a young novitiate about to take conventual vows; to herself, she was an enlisted soldier who has received marching orders, and whose heart exults soberly, since there are ties which may be broken, and death, perhaps, awaiting, but even so exults with joyful response.

Thus, to most of those who heard her, Anna's little speech was a distinct disappointment; the very loftiness of her conception of her calling made it featureless, and robbed it of adaptation to easy emotional effect. The ladies who had discussed her before her speech found, after it, that it was, after all, exactly what might have been expected — altogether of a piece with the austerity of her figure, and her sad, colourless face, no warmth, no emotion — just the hard Puritan conscience at its hardest.

There were two or three only who felt the spiritual elevation belonging to the girl and to what she said, and the underlying pathos of her high restraint, as too great to put into the conventional phrases of sympathy and praise, and so kept silence.

There was a brief pause after Anna returned to her seat, during which people stirred and spoke in low tones, and the beaded lady leaned over and thanked Anna for her "charming little talk." Then Mrs. Westervelt, the guest from Boston came forward and began speaking with a winning smile, a gentle, soothing voice, and an

affectionate reference to "the dear, sweet young sister." She had the ease and flexibility of the practised public speaker; the winning and dimpled smile with which she won the company at the start was in frequent use, and she made constant motions with a pair of very white hands. She was quietly dressed, and yet, after the straightness of Anna's poor best gown, her attire had its own air of handsome comfort. The perfect command of her voice and of herself established instantaneously a *rapport* with her audience, of which Anna, in her inexperience, had never dreamed.

Her beloved Mrs. Ingraham, she said, had asked her to tell the dear friends of some wonderful answers to prayer which she had recently experienced, but before doing this she craved the privilege of reading a few verses of Scripture.

She then read certain passages from the prophecy of Zechariah, detached from one another, taken entirely from their historic setting, but fitted together with some care. The speaker explained that she had, in her earlier Christian life, found some difficulty in interpreting this rather obscure passage, but in the new life of complete sanctification, into which it had been her glorious privilege to enter, she had come to see all Scripture by a new and marvellous light. No longer did she trust to the dry and formal explanations of scholars, many of whom, it was but too well known, had never had the deep things of God revealed to them, and who had been led into many errors by their pride of learning. All that kind of study was past for her, for the dear Lord himself showed her, when she lifted her heart to him, just what he meant in his blessed word. This had been her experience in regard to the passage just read. To

the natural mind there were difficulties in it, but just below the surface was the great precious truth which God would have all his children receive. It had been given her that when she came to the beautiful home of Mrs. Ingraham, and should be called upon to speak to these friends, she must bring them this particular passage. But it had looked dark to her, and she was in doubt how to interpret it. But as she had been in the cars, coming up from Boston, she had said: "Now, Lord, those dear friends in Burlington will want to know just what you meant by that sweet portion of your word, and I do not feel that I can tell them unless you enlighten me. What is it that is intended by the two staves in the hand of the prophet, one called Beauty and one called Bands?"

Then the dear Lord had sweetly spoken in the secret place of her heart, as distinctly as if with an audible voice: "My child, the old life of formalism, of coldness, and of worldly pleasure in which many Christians live is the staff called Bands. The higher life, the life of answered prayer, the life of perfect sanctification and fulness of blessing, is Beauty. Take this message to my dear children in Burlington."

Oh, how simple! Oh, how sweet! Who would weary heart and brain over the interpretations of rationalistic German commentators, when we could thus have the direct interpretation of his own word by the Lord himself?

Thus Mrs. Westervelt proceeded at some length on this line, and then, with tearful eyes and an added intensity of the personal element, she rehearsed the answers to prayer which her friend, Mrs. Ingraham, had rightly called wonderful. Thus, in carrying on the work of preaching perfect sanctification in Boston, a room had

been needed for meetings. Two or three of the little band had prayed, and within a week they had had a most suitable room offered them by a precious sister, but it was unfurnished. The details of securing the equipment of this room were now described. Each piece of furniture, the speaker declared, had been directly given in answer to special prayer and by a marvellous interposition. If any natural means had been at work by which persons in sympathy with their efforts were led to supply their obvious needs, these were not mentioned. Plainly it was Mrs. Westervelt's conception of a perfect relation to God that the one sustaining it should receive constant miraculous testimony of the divine favour. The privilege of attaining this condition was presented with fervid emphasis. It was the high and perfect life! Who would live on the old plane when this was what God had for them? Oh, how beautiful it was to trust! Why should we ever doubt, when we were so plainly told that *whatsoever* we ask we shall receive?

As Mrs. Westervelt went on, many of her hearers were moved to tears, and a continuous response of sympathetic looks and subdued exclamations followed her recital of her surprising experiences. The wealthy women present felt that this was certainly a fine thing for those who could not get what they wanted by ordinary business methods, but were, perhaps, secretly glad that they were not themselves called upon to test their relation to God quite so pointedly. The poorer and humbler guests wept profusely, thinking how long they had stumbled on in the dull and inferior practice of working painfully for many needed things, which might all have been miraculously given them, if they had only been favourites of God, like Mrs. Westervelt, or, as she

would have said, "had only just stepped out into the fulness."

Anna Mallison sat and listened in unspeakable astonishment.

This was as absolutely new a gospel to her as the gospel of Christ to a disciple of Buddha. It was her first contact with sentimental religion.

The God of her father had been the immutable and eternal Creator, the high and holy One inhabiting eternity, the Judge of all the earth. Through the Incarnation the just anger of this Holy Being toward sinful men had been appeased. But although in Christ there had been found access to God and an Intercessor, never had it entered into the heart of Samuel Mallison or those whom he led to regard themselves as occupying a position other than of deepest humility, self-distrust, awe, and reverence.

Mrs. Westervelt's phraseology was almost like a foreign tongue to Anna. The constant use of terms of familiar endearment in speaking of the Almighty; the application of affectionate and flattering adjectives on all sides; the sense of a peculiar and intimate relation established between herself and God; and the free-and-easy conversational, in fact, rather colloquial, style in which she held herself privileged to communicate with him, — were almost amazing to her. And beneath all these superficial marks of a new cult, lay the deeper sense of the inherent disparity. Religion to Anna had been, it has been said earlier, a system of prohibitions, of self-denials, of self-abasement, with only at rare intervals the illumination of a profound sense of the love of God. Here was a religion which held up a species of luxurious spiritual enjoyment, of unrestrained freedom in approach-

ing God, of an indubitable sense of being personally on the best of terms with him, as the privilege of all true believers.

The conception of prayer which Mrs. Westervelt had demonstrated was not less surprising to Anna. She knew that there were wide and sweeping scriptural promises with regard to prayer, but she had always felt a deep mystery attaching itself to them. For herself, she had never ventured to intrude her temporal gratifications and designs upon the attention of her God, but had rather felt a sober silence regarding these things to best befit a sinful creature coming before a holy Creator. Half revolting, but half smitten with compunction, the thought now flashed through her mind that, if she had only prayed after this new sort, her father might have received the oranges for which he had sorely longed in the months before his death. This luxury was not to be obtained in Haran, and had therefore been patiently foregone, heaven and Burlington having seemed equally inaccessible at the time.

Mrs. Westervelt sat down, and the meeting broke up, a swarm of enthusiastic, tearful women rushing to surround her and pour out their effusive appreciation of her wonderful address. Anna stood bewildered and alone, doubting within herself. Had it all been the highest consecration, as it undoubtedly desired to be? or had it been the highest presumption, the old temptation of spiritual pride, assuming a new guise?

Two clergymen of the city, who had been attentive listeners during the whole evening, not being moved to pour out their admiration upon either speaker, quietly strayed across the hall into Mr. Ingraham's library. The senator himself was absent.

"Well, Nichols," said Dr. Harvey, the older man, who had a shrewd, kindly, smooth-shaven face, "what do you think of that for Old Testament exegesis?"

"It was pretty stiff to have the responsibility for it given to the Lord," returned his friend. "I almost felt like interrupting her to say that, with all due respect, the Lord never told her any such thing, her interpretation being monstrously untrue."

"It was awful, simply awful," said the other, with slow emphasis. "Such fantastic tricks before high heaven might make men, as well as angels, weep. And then her familiarity with the Lord, Nichols, — why, man, she positively patronized the Almighty!"

"It is true, and yet, do you know, Doctor, that woman has some extraordinary elements for success in such work?"

"If she hadn't, she would be of no importance, my dear fellow. She has a fine homiletic instinct. That is just where the danger lies. But, after all, she represents only one danger — there are others. She is simply the modern mystic — a kind of latter-day, diluted Madame Guyon. Too much of the thing is a trifle nauseous, perhaps, but it represents the revolt of devout souls, in every age, from formalism, and is inevitably an excess, like all revolt. Doubtless there will be such revolt, world without end, and it will have its uses."

"It was fairly pathetic to see how eagerly those women rushed forward to receive her; evidently that's the message they are pining for. They don't go for us that way, Doctor."

"No; and they didn't for that first speaker, Mallison's daughter. I knew him. Poor man, what a mystic he might have made, if he had let himself go! This girl is

much like him — the old New England type; religion with all colour and sentiment clean purged out of it. Cold as ice, chaste as snow, the antipodes of the Guyon-Westervelt danger. Talk of holiness, — poor Mallison, — he was the holiest man I ever knew, and in this life the least rewarded," and the old clergyman shook his head with a mournful smile.

"I fancied, when I heard her speak, although I had no idea who she was, that this daughter of his had not exactly revelled in the luxury of religion."

"No; but I tell you, Nichols, she is none the worse for that, at her age. There is a hardihood, an unconscious, sturdy fortitude in that earlier type, which we mightily need in the world to-day. To me, that girl was positively beautiful, because — notice what I say, Nichols — she is absolutely true."

"Very likely."

"Yes; but when you have thought it over, tell me, some day, how many men and women you know of whom you can say that. If you know one, you will do well."

Dr. Harvey, as he said these words, rose to leave the library, but stopped and stood, as there appeared at that moment at the hall door the figure of a man who was apparently passing through the hall. So silent and so sudden was his coming, and so singular his aspect, that the younger of the two men, perceiving him, started violently in involuntary surprise, and was conscious of a disagreeable sensation along the course of his veins.

This man, who had approached the door with noiseless steps, might have been young, or might have been old. He was of unusual height, with narrow shoulders, short body, and disproportionate length of limb. His

face, an elongated oval, was of as smooth surface as that of a woman, and of the shape and pale even colour of an egg. The enormous forehead, the eyes, small and narrow, set wide apart and obliquely, the flattened nose, the straight, wide, almost lipless mouth, combined with an expression of crafty complacence to give the man a singularly alien semblance. As he stood, he smiled slowly, a smile which emphasized both the craftiness and the complacency of his expression, and remarked in a high, thin voice: —

"Just going, Doctor? Make yourself at home here, that's all right."

He carried a rather large, morocco-bound note-book in one hand, and a silver pencil-case in the other. His hands were extremely delicate and white, with sinuous, flexible fingers, of such phenomenal length as to suggest an extra, simian joint. They conveyed to the young clergyman a sense of expressing the same craft as the face, and a yet more palpable cruelty. The unpleasant impression became more pronounced, for, seeing the hands, young Nichols involuntarily shivered.

Probably this fact was not noticed by the newcomer, but, having thus spoken and smiling one more chilling smile, he passed on to the other end of the hall.

Eyes rather than voice asked in astonishment, "Who is that?"

"Oliver Ingraham, the senator's son," was the elder clergyman's reply, as they left the library together, "the son of his first wife." Dr. Harvey was Mrs. Ingraham's pastor.

"Incredible!" cried the other, under his breath. "I never saw him, never heard of his existence."

The other shook his head with gravely troubled look.

"He is only here when it becomes impossible to keep him elsewhere."

"Is he insane? imbecile? what is he?"

"Not the first, not the second. I cannot answer the third question."

CHAPTER X

She sitteth in a silence of her own;
Behind her, on the ground, a red rose lies;
Her thinking brow is bent, nor doth arise
Her gaze from that shut book whose word unknown
Her firm hands hide from her; there all alone
She sitteth in thought trouble, maidenwise.

—R. W. Gilder.

An October morning, and breakfast-time in the Ingraham household. Great doors stood open into the dining room, where the vast round table could be seen with its glittering array of silver, and the grace and colour of exquisite flowers.

A slender girl, as graceful and charming in her simple morning dress as the flowers she had just placed on the table, stood in the doorway, waiting, a shade of impatience on her face. Behind her, at one of the dining-room windows, stood Oliver Ingraham, her half-brother. Mrs. Ingraham, with her other daughters, one older, one younger, were in the adjoining library. Outside, in the hall, a man paced up and down with impatience which he did not attempt to conceal. This was Mr. Ingraham himself, a man of good height, fine, erect figure, and youthful energy of motion and bearing. His hair was grey, as also his heavy mustache and imperial; his eyes grey also, keen, clear, but inclined to wander with disconcerting swiftness; he had a high, beaklike nose, and a fine, carefully kept skin, in which a network of dark red veins betrayed the high liver. He was at

once peremptory and gracious, military and courtly, a man of the world and of affairs on a large scale.

With watch in hand he entered the library and approached his wife.

"Cornelia," he said, smiling with good-tempered sarcasm, "does it strike you that the show is a little late in opening? I dislike to mention it, but it is already ten minutes past eight. I am not familiar with the social customs of Abyssinia, nor even of Macedonia, but in the United States it is considered good form for guests, albeit lions, to come to breakfast on time. Even the Hyrcan tiger, I understand, is usually prompt in his attendance on that function —"

"Papa!" cried his youngest daughter, Louise, "you are perfectly dreadful."

Mrs. Ingraham looked up into her husband's face with her mild, conciliating smile.

"I am so sorry, Justin," she said softly, "but I suppose the poor dear creatures are very tired after the meeting last night, and their journey, and all —"

There was a slight noise on the stairs as she spoke, and Mr. Ingraham faced about with military precision to receive in succession a number of ladies, who filed into the room, and were warmly greeted and promptly presented to him by his wife. Two were visitors from New York, substantial "Board women"; other two, returned missionaries from Japan; the last to enter was a shy, brown little person with soft dark eyes, a native Hindu, who could only communicate with her host by a gentle, pleading smile. All were in attendance on a great missionary conference held in Burlington that week, drawing its supporters from all New England and New York.

"Shall we go to breakfast, Cornelia?" Mr. Ingraham asked, having infused sudden courage into the trembling breast of the little native by his gallant attention. "Are we all here?"

"Why, no, papa," interposed his youngest daughter; "we must wait for Mr. Burgess."

"Mr. Burgess?" repeated her father, in a musing tone. "I do not recall that I have met him. Is the gentleman an invalid?"

"At least the gentleman is here, papa," murmured Louise, directing his attention to a young man who at the moment entered the room, and approached Mrs. Ingraham with a few words of courteous apology.

Meeting him, Mr. Ingraham saw a slender, youthful figure, somewhat below the average of masculine height, a man of delicate physique, perhaps five and twenty years old, with a serious, sensitive face, and earnest blue eyes looking out through glasses; a young man who presented himself with quiet self-possession, and bore the unmistakable marks of good breeding.

As they took their places around the breakfast table, Keith Burgess, for this was the young man's name, found himself seated opposite Oliver, with whom he was not drawn to converse, and between the second Miss Ingraham and the little Aroona-bia. Conversation with the latter being necessarily of an extremely limited nature, her gentle lisping of "yes" and "thank you" being somewhat indiscriminate, the guest found himself shortly occupied exclusively with his very pretty neighbour.

"You know, Mr. Burgess," she was presently saying, "I almost feel that I know you already."

"How so?" asked Keith, simply. It was plain that,

although accustomed to the refinements of life, this was not a man accomplished in social subtleties. There was, in fact, a curiously unworldly expression in the young fellow's eyes, and somewhat of thoughtful introspection.

"Why, you see mamma and some of her friends who heard you speak last spring have told us so much about you."

Keith bowed slightly, without reply.

"And you can't think, Mr. Burgess, how delighted we are to have you come to Burlington. We were so afraid you would leave for the East before we could hear you, and I assure you that would have been a great disappointment. I think you sail in the spring, do you not?"

"Yes, in May, as soon as I graduate."

"And it is for India?"

"I suppose so. It is not fully determined, but that would be my choice, and I believe the Board incline that way."

The pretty Miss Ingraham, whose name was Gertrude, sighed a very little.

"It is all so wonderful, so almost incredible, to me that any one young and like other people, don't you know? can really go," she said gently. "There *are* people to whom it seems perfectly natural. Mamma has a new protégée who is to go out as a missionary teacher a year from this fall. She is very young, only twenty-one, and we all think she is lovely; but still, for her it seems really the only thing to be expected. She has the genuine missionary air already, and you would know she could not be anything else, somehow."

Keith looked civilly, but not keenly, interested.

"I wonder if it is any one I have heard of," he remarked. "It is our Board that sends her?"

"Yes. Her name is Mallison, Anna Mallison. Her father was a country minister up in the mountainous part of the state. Poor thing! She will find India quite a change after Vermont winters, I should think."

"An improvement, perhaps," said Keith, smiling. "But really, Miss Ingraham, going back to what you said a moment ago, why should it seem so incredible for a man who has devoted himself to the service of God, truly and unreservedly, to be willing to go where what little he can do is most needed? Many men go to foreign countries and remain the better part of their lives for business purposes: men in the navy; Englishmen, of course, of social and political ambitions, by hundreds. Do you ever feel that there is anything extraordinary or superhuman in what they do?"

Gertrude Ingraham was looking at the young man with almost devout attention.

"No," she answered, shaking her head with pretty humility, seeing which way he led.

"Then why," pursued Keith Burgess, leaning over to look steadily in her face with his earnest eyes, and lowering his voice to a deeper emphasis, "why do you wonder that now and then a man should be willing to do for the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls what a hundred men do as a matter of course for their own selfish ambition and the gaining of money?"

The girl looked down, the brightness of her face softened by serious feeling.

"The only wonder, Miss Ingraham, is that so few do it. For my own part I do not see how a fellow who goes into the ministry, as things are now, can do

anything else," and Keith turned back to his neglected breakfast. Thereafter he was drawn into conversation, across the mute languor of the little Hindu, with his host, who had questions to ask regarding Fulham, which had been his college.

At four o'clock that afternoon, Keith Burgess, sitting in a large congregation in Dr. Harvey's stately church, listening with consciously declining interest to a long statistical report which was being read from the pulpit, felt himself touched on the shoulder. Looking up he saw the Rev. Frank Nichols, pastor of a mission church in the city. He had known him well in college, a clear-eyed, well set-up young cleric. Nichols invited him by a word and look to follow him, and together they quietly left the assembly.

When they had reached the street and the crisp autumn air, Keith shook himself with a motion of relief.

"Is there anything more tiresome than such a succession of meetings?" he exclaimed. "Shall we walk? I am in a hurry to climb one of these hills."

"We must do it later," returned Nichols; "but if you are not too tired I want to take you down this street and on a block or two to my church. The women are having a meeting there this afternoon."

"Oh, yes, I remember; but will it be in order for us to intrude?"

"Yes, that will be all right. The brethren drop in quietly now and then, and are welcome. You needn't stay long, for you are tired, I know by your face; but I tell you what it is, Burgess, I want you to hear Anna Mallison."

Anna Mallison! again that name which he had heard

in the morning. It began to have a strangely musical quality to Keith's ears.

"I have heard her name. She is under appointment, I believe. A good speaker?"

"No, not a particularly good speaker, but, as Dr. Harvey once said to me, an absolutely true nature. She is a young woman of strong personality, but singularly destitute of the desire to impress herself, and with a certain touch of the unconsciously heroic about her which you feel but cannot describe. I have never met a girl of precisely her type before, myself, and I am curious to know what you will think of her."

Entering the small, unpretentious church, Nichols and his friend sat down in the first row of seats, next to the central aisle. The room was nearly full; several women were upon the platform, from which the pulpit had been removed. One woman was speaking in a high-keyed, plaintive voice.

It was not a stable or quiet audience; some were leaving their seats, others coming in, many turning their heads to catch glimpses of expected friends. Behind the young men came in two girls who remained standing close beside them in the aisle for a little space. One of these girls had pretty, fair hair and peachy cheeks; she was dressed in deep blue with touches of gilt cord and buttons, giving a kind of coquettish military jauntiness to her appearance. She wore a small round hat, of dark blue, which set off her pretty hair charmingly. Her manner was full of quick, eager animation; she smiled much and whispered to her companion continually. This companion stood motionless and unresponsive to the frequent appeals made to her, a quiet face and figure, a dress and bonnet of plain and unadorned black, ill suited to

her youth; but it was her face and figure rather than the other to which Keith Burgess found his attention riveted. He knew intuitively, before Nichols told him, that this was Anna Mallison; but without this knowledge he felt that he must still have kept his eyes upon her face. The repose of it, the purity and elevation of the look, the serene, serious sweetness, were what he had seen in the faces of angels men have dreamed of rather than of women they have loved. But that she was after all a woman, with a woman's sensitiveness and impressibility, he fancied was manifest when, having perhaps felt his look resting thus intently on her face, Anna turned and their eyes met in an instant's direct, uninterrupted gaze, whereupon a deep flush rose and spread over the clear brown pallor of her face, and she turned, and bent to speak to her friend, as if to cover a slight confusion.

The friend was Mally Loveland, and she was finding her position a particularly satisfactory one at the moment, being aware that Mr. Nichols was so placed as to take in the best points of her new fall costume in a side view. It was for him, not for Anna, that she had been using so much of nervous energy in the last few minutes.

A lady who had left the platform for the purpose now came down the aisle, and, taking Anna Mallison by the hand with a word of welcome, conducted her to the front of the church. Mally, thus left alone, fluttered into a place made for her, seeming to discover Mr. Nichols as she turned, and smiling surprise and pleasure upon him.

Just before Anna began to address the gathering, while a hymn was sung, Keith Burgess quietly made his way to a seat near the front of the church, at the side of the platform. He had excused himself to Nichols, who had

then asked and obtained permission to sit beside Mally, an incident productive of a vast amount of conscious and fluttering delight on the part of that young lady.

The austerity of Anna Mallison's religious life had, under the influence of Mrs. Westervelt and her disciple, Mrs. Ingraham, relaxed within a few months to a marked degree. New conceptions of a relation of joyful assurance, of conscious acceptance with God, had risen within her, with the perception that religion was not exclusively prohibition, and conscience its only energy. Something of warmth and brightness had been infused into her chill, colourless, outward life, furthermore, by the intercourse with the Ingrahams which had followed her first visit. She was still in a manner ice-bound in her interior life and in her capacity for expression, but the ice was beginning to yield and here and there to break up a little.

Thus, in the manner with which she spoke on this occasion, there was something of gentleness, and a less uncompromising self-restraint than when she had first spoken before an audience. She was still noticeably reserved, still innocent of the orator's arts, or of conscious seeking to produce an effect; she still delivered herself of her simple message as if it were a duty to be discharged rather than an opportunity to be grasped. But through the coldness of all this neutrality there pierced now and then a ray of the radiant purity and loftiness of the girl's inner nature, and this time those who heard her did not pity or patronize her in their thoughts.

Keith Burgess watched her from the place he had chosen. Her tall, meagre figure in its nunlike dress was sharply outlined against a palely tinted window opposite,

through which the October sun shone. She stood without support of table or desk, her hands falling straight at her sides, and looked directly at the people she addressed, fearless, since burdened with the sense of immortal destinies, not with a consciousness of herself. Keith noted the hand which fell against the straight black folds of her dress; its fine shape and delicate texture alone expressed her ladyhood. She could not have been called pretty, but her face thus seen in profile was almost beautiful, the hollowness of the cheeks and the stringent thinness of all the contours being less obvious.

But Keith Burgess was not occupied with Anna's face and figure to any serious degree. He knew instinctively that she was of good birth and breeding; he saw that, though severe and angular in person and manner, she was womanly, noble, refined. He divined, as no one could have failed to divine, the essential truth and purity of her nature. From her simple, unfeigned utterance he perceived the high earnestness and consecration with which she was entering upon missionary labour. Perceiving all those things, the young man looked and listened with a sudden, momentous question taking swift shape in his mind.

He remained until the close of the meeting and met Anna, introducing himself, as he preferred doing. She received his few expressions of satisfaction in hearing her with scant response, and apparently with neither surprise or gratification. He did not like her the less for that.

The Ingrahams found Keith sober and preoccupied at dinner that night, but, as he was to be chief speaker at the evening session of the convention, they thought this natural and in order. He was liked and was treated with

especial consideration by them all, and even Mr. Ingraham did him the honour of going to the church to hear him speak. He had no sympathy with his wife's penchant for missions, but he thought Burgess was "a nice little fellow," and he wanted to see what kind of a speech he could make.

The different members of the family and their guests came home one after another late in the evening, and, as they met, exchanged enthusiastic expressions concerning the eloquence of Keith Burgess. Mrs. Ingraham and the Board ladies thought the dear young man had a wonderful gift; Aroona-bia smiled tenderly in assent; the girls said he was simply perfect; and Mr. Ingraham admitted that, when he had worked off some of his "sophomoric effervescence," he might make a good deal of an orator, and added, under his breath, it was nothing less than a crime to send a delicate, talented boy like that to make food for those barbarians, whose souls weren't worth the sacrifice, even if he could save them, which he couldn't.

"Very true, dear," rejoined his wife; "no man can save another's soul; he can only lead him to the dear Lord's feet."

The senator bit short a sharp reply, and just then Keith himself appeared, looking pale and exhausted, deprecating wearily the praise they were eager to bestow upon him, and begging to be excused if he withdrew at once to his room.

As the sound of his footsteps was lost in the hall above, Mrs. Ingraham said: —

"I am sorry Mr. Burgess was so tired. I invited Anna Mallison to come here for the night, and I wanted him to meet her. Mrs. Churchill has asked the oppor-

tunity for a little talk with Anna in the morning, and it will be convenient for her to be here. It is so far to her rooms, you know."

"I should think the house was full already, mamma," remarked Gertrude Ingraham. "Where can we put her?"

"Oh, she will not mind going up to the south room in the third story, my dear. I told Jane to have it in order."

Just then Miss Ingraham came into the house and Anna Mallison was with her.

CHAPTER XI

The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.
—The Rubaiyat.

In a few moments after he had reached his room Keith Burgess heard a knock at his door. Opening it, he found a neat, white-capped maid who bore a tray; entering demurely, she placed it upon a small table, remarking that Mrs. Ingraham thought he would need refreshment. The tray held an exquisite china service for one person, a pot of chocolate, and delicate rolls and cakes.

"Miss Gertrude said I was to light your fire," the maid said, proceeding to remove the fender and strike a match for the purpose.

"Very well," replied Keith, walking to the other side of the room. The night air was sharp, and he liked the notion.

A moment later the maid withdrew, with the noiseless, unobtrusive step and movement of the well-trained servant, and Keith, when he turned, found the room already enlivened by the firelight. The table was drawn to a cosey corner on the hearth-rug, a deep cushioned easy-chair beside it. The fragrant steam of the hot chocolate rose invitingly, and as Keith threw himself with a long sigh of comfort into the chair, he detected another fragrance, and perceived, lying upon the plate,

a single rose, and around the stem a slip of white paper. On the paper, Keith found a few words written: "You must let me thank you for the great uplift you have given me to-night. GERTRUDE INGRAHAM."

The young man, rising, put the flower in a clean glass vase on his mantle, and the note in the inner compartment of his writing-case, touching both with careful gentleness. Then, returning to the fireside, he fell to drinking and eating with cordial satisfaction in all this creature comfort; but as he ate and drank and grew warm, he was thinking steadily.

He was not minded to flatter himself unduly, but what was he justified in inferring from Gertrude's action and from other small signs which he had seen? Simply, that she liked him; honoured him above his due; probably idealized him; possibly, if he sought her deeper regard, might respond.

He liked her thoroughly. What man would not? She was very pretty, and her beauty was enhanced by faultless dress, — no small thing in itself. Her manners were charming, with the charm of a sweet nature, aided by the polish of high social intercourse; she had the thousand little nameless, flattering graces of the woman, who, old or young, instinctively knows how to put a man at his best. Furthermore, Keith was not insensible to the background against which this girl was set. The aristocratic, powerful family connection, the magnificent home, the wealth and grace and ease of life, the fine manners and habits of thought and conduct belonging to the Ingrahams, were not matters of naught to him. He liked all these things. What was more, he knew perfectly that there was no element of temptation in them to lead him from his chosen path of altruism; Mrs. In-

graham's well-known missionary ardour and Gertrude's delicate sympathy were guarantee for that. They understood perfectly that within six months he would depart for an exile of perhaps a lifetime, in an alien and uncongenial land, where he would work under conditions of life repulsive and depressing to the last degree. Nevertheless, he believed without vanity that Gertrude Ingraham, knowing all, foreseeing all, could care for him.

Keith Burgess had come, suddenly perhaps, but definitely, to the conclusion that he wanted a wife; and, furthermore, that he wanted a wife who would go out with him to India six months hence. Consequently, as he sat by the fire which Gertrude Ingraham had lighted for him, he pursued this line of thought with significant persistence.

A curious condition, however, attended his reflections. While he sat by Gertrude's fire, tasted her dainty food, inhaled the fragrance of the rose she had sent him, and thought of her in all her beauty and grace, he did not *see* her. Instead of her figure, there stood constantly before the eye of his mind the tall, austere form of Anna Mallison, in the unsoftened simplicity of her manner and apparel, and in her passionless, unresponding repose. He thought of Gertrude Ingraham, but he saw Anna Mallison.

She had travelled the way that he had come. Outwardly there might be coldness between them, but inwardly there must be the profoundest basis of sympathy. The same master conviction had won and held their two souls. He could not have known her better, it seemed to him, had he known her all his life. The things which would have repelled another man were what drew him all the more to her. It was not the passion

of love which had so suddenly awakened within him, but a mighty longing for what Keith Burgess had thus far gone through life without, — a true and satisfying sympathy with his religious life and its aspirations. A girl like Gertrude Ingraham might accept his religion and the shape it took, but it would be because she cared for him; a girl like Anna Mallison might, perhaps, accept him, but it would be because of his religion and the shape it had taken. At this crisis of his life the enthusiasm for his calling ruled him as no human love could, and by it all the issues of life must stand or fall.

Hours passed. The fire died out to a core of dull red embers, the single rose drooped on its stem, the tray of food stood despoiled and indifferent; the words of the small white paper were forgotten, and Keith Burgess, throwing himself upon his knees, prayed thus to God: —

"Oh, my Lord, if thou wilt grant me so great a good as to win her for my wife, if thou wilt bless me in seeking her, if it is according to thy will that our lives should be united, and that together we should carry the cross of Christ to the lost, grant me, O Lord, a sign. But if it be not thy will, make this, too, known to me. Thy will I seek, O my God, in this, in all things."

Then, being wearied in brain and body, he slept heavily until morning.

When, just before the breakfast hour, Keith stepped into the hall, he paused a moment, hearing a step on the stairs above him leading from the third story rooms. He advanced slowly to the head of the next staircase, and not until he reached it did he see who it was descending from above. Then, lifting his eyes, he saw Anna Mallison.

Her presence in this house, at this hour, so surpris-

ing, so unlooked-for, so almost unnatural, since her home was elsewhere in the city — what did it mean? It was the sign he had craved. How else could he interpret it?

The blood rushed in sudden flow to his heart, leaving his face colourless.

Anna, not being surprised to meet him thus, was simply saying "Good morning," and passing down the stairs. Keith put out his hand and stopped her going.

So marvellous did her presence seem to him that he forthwith spoke out with unconventional directness the thought in his mind.

"I think you do not know just what it means that you are here, in this house, this morning."

Mally Loveland would have flashed some pert rejoinder to a comment like this; Gertrude Ingraham, in a similar situation, would have looked at Keith Burgess with pretty wonder and smiling question.

Anna Mallison, seeing the pallor and emotion of his face, and having become wonted to the supernatural interpretation of the small events of human life, only said gravely and without obvious surprise:—

"I do not, perhaps, know all that it means. I trust it means no trouble to any one — to you."

"No," he answered, a slight tremor in his voice; "I cannot believe that it does. You came under the divine leading, no matter how or why you seemed to yourself to come. You came as a sign. I had asked a sign of God. I did not dream of your presence in this house. Seeing you now, so unexpectedly, how can I doubt any further? It is the will of God."

Anna looked straight into Keith's face, a deep shadow of perplexity on her own, but she did not speak.

He smiled slightly.

"You cannot understand, and no wonder. I am speaking to you as I have no right to — in the dark. It is for you to say whether, by and by, before I go to-morrow morning, I may explain my meaning and try to make clear to you what is so clear to me."

It was Anna now who grew perturbed, for the significance of his words, although veiled, was manifest. She turned and descended the stairs without speaking, Keith Burgess following her in silence. She did not herself understand her own sharp recoil and dismay, but all the maiden instinct of defence was in alarm within her.

At the foot of the stairs they both paused for an instant, and Keith asked in a low voice: —

"Will you walk with me on these hills somewhere, alone, this afternoon at four o'clock?"

A sudden great sense of revolt arose in the girl's heart, and broke in a faint sob upon her lips. She did not want to walk on the hills with him — with any man. She did not want to hear what he had to say. But he had said it was the will of God, their thus meeting. He had sought that awful, irrefragable will, and she had acted, it seemed, in obedience to it in coming to this house. What was she, to be found fighting against God?

She felt herself constrained to say yes.

CHAPTER XII

. . . I made answer to my friend: "Of a surety I have now set my feet on that point of life beyond the which he must not pass who would return."
— *The New Life*, DANTE.

"I ASK you, Anna Mallison, to go out with me to my work in India in May, as my wife."

Thus Keith Burgess, having recounted the story of the lights and leadings of the past twenty-four hours.

They were standing, and faced one another in a yellow beech wood where the sky above their heads was shut out by the sun-lightened paving of the clustering leaves.

As she came down the woodland path Anna had broken off a long stem of goldenrod, and she held it hung like an inverted torch at her side, like a sad vestal virgin at some ancient funeral rites.

"Forgive me for bringing this to you so swiftly. I know it seems hasty, perhaps unreasonably so. But to me no time or acquaintance, however extended, could change my wish. And, you see, my time is so very short, now!"

Keith Burgess looked with his whole soul's sincerity into Anna's face, and the integrity of his purpose, of his whole nature, could not be mistaken.

"It is not the suddenness, I think," she replied slowly, with unconscious coldness; "like you, I feel that the great facts of God's will and providence may be made clear to us instantly."

Then she hesitated and paused.

"Please go on," the young man said gently.

"It is only," she answered, with a pathos which a woman would have understood, "that I did not want to be married at all. I had never thought of it as being a thing I needed to be troubled about."

Keith Burgess smiled faintly at her frankness, which was not cruel of intention, he knew, but his smile touched Anna's heart.

"I did not wish to trouble you," he said quietly.

"Please do not misunderstand me. It was not the way to express it — my words sounded unkind, I am afraid. I should learn better ways of gentler speaking. Other women seem to have them naturally."

"I like it that you are honest, even if it hurts," said Keith, steadily.

"I did not mean that you trouble me — not exactly. Only that my life looked so plain and clear to me, and this is so surprising — it seems to change things so."

"Only by a little outward difference. I should not dare to ask you to go as my wife if I did not believe that you could work more effectively so, perhaps," he added timidly, "even more happily, if I had strength and protection to give you, and a home of some sort, however poor, in that strange land."

Something in the quality of his voice brought swift tears to Anna's eyes. It was so new to have some one thinking and caring for her ease and happiness. It had so long been her part to do this for others, to forget herself, and take it quite for granted that others should forget her.

He saw his advantage, and sought to follow it.

"The thought of marriage is unwelcome to you," he said earnestly, "because it is foreign and unfamiliar. I

think you are very different from most girls of your age, and have lived a different inward life, higher and purer, and free from personal aims in a wonderful way. But even so, regarding marriage I believe you are wrong. You think of it as an interruption, almost as a decline from the life you had meant to live. On the contrary, God has made it to be the very best life, the normal and fulfilled life, in which each is at the strongest and best. Where my work for God and men might fall utterly to the ground, you, by your purer insight, might help me to make it availing; and perhaps the poor service I could give might help a little to carry forward your work."

Anna lifted her hand in a slight, expressive gesture.

"Look at the whole thing a moment," cried Keith, with sudden boldness, "as if you were not you and I not I. Here are two persons, man and woman, of the same age within two or three years, led of the same Spirit to the same purpose and consecration and calling; both ready to go out to the same unknown land, lonely and apart, and there to work as best they may far from any human being they have ever seen or known. Such were we. And now God, looking upon us, sees that each needs the other, and in his good providence he leads us here to this place. I see you, and instantly my heart goes out to you as the companion, the other self, I need. My soul recognizes in you its counterpart. God, in answer to my prayer that he will make known his will, suddenly, most unexpectedly, as I start on the new day, brings you before me before I have spoken or met with man or woman, as the first, best light of morning. What does God mean? Ask yourself, Anna Mallison, ask him. For my own part, I cannot doubt his will. I have no right to thrust my conviction upon

you forcibly, but to me this is as clearly the call of God as my call to the foreign field or to the divine service."

They were still standing face to face, and while Keith spoke Anna looked into his eyes with the serious directness of one listening to an argument of weighty but impersonal import. With all his conviction and earnestness, he was as passionless as she, save for his religious passion. A strange wooing!

Anna turned now and walked on along the mossy path in silence.

"Take time to consider, — all the time you need. Do not try to decide now," said Keith, walking at her side. She made no reply; in fact, she did not realize that he spoke. Her mind was working in intense concentration.

Keith Burgess alone she would have turned away without a moment's doubt, but he had, or seemed to have, a mighty Ally. She did not fear him in rejecting nor desire him in accepting, but to reject God! — that she feared; to accept God in every manifestation of his will was her deepest desire.

But what if Keith were wrong in his conviction? Her pale face flushed with a flame of indignation as she thought of it, that a man, whom she had never met or known, sought or desired, could suddenly invade the very citadel of her will, and summon her to surrender her very life into his keeping, in the great Name, when, perhaps, he was self-deceived, was coming in his own name, to do his own will. She looked aside at Keith's face as he walked by her, in sudden distrust. It wore no flush of passion, and in the blue eyes was the light less of earthly love than of heavenly. It was a look pure and high, such as a man might fitly wear as he approached the sacrament. A sudden awe fell upon

Anna, as if she were looking upon one who had talked with God, and her eyes fell, the lashes weighted with heavy, unshed tears.

"He is better than I," she thought; "a man like this could not lead me wrong."

White and cold, and with a strange sinking at her heart, she turned to him soon, and stopped where she stood.

He looked into her face, his own suffused with emotion. She held out both her hands, the goldenrod, which she had held until now, falling to the ground. Keith Burgess took them in both his, and Anna felt that his hands trembled far more than did her own.

"I believe you were right," she said simply. "It is the will of God."

He kissed her then on her brow and on her lips, the salutation disturbing her no more than if he had been her brother.

"Please, will you let me go home now, alone, Mr. Burgess?" she asked humbly, like a child.

Keith was disappointed, but consented at once.

"Only," he said, "you should not call me Mr. Burgess. My name for you is Keith."

"Not yet," she answered. "In outward things and ways remember, please, that we are perfect strangers. It is only in the spirit that we have met."

Then she left him, and Keith Burgess stood watching the tall, dark figure swiftly receding down the wood walk in the yellow light. His look was wistful. He longed to go after her, but he forebore.

Anna hastened down into the city streets and to the hospital where she was on duty every afternoon. There was plenty of work awaiting her, and not for a moment

was she free or left alone to think her own thoughts. Six o'clock found her back in her own rooms at Mrs. Wilson's. They were low and dull after the fine spaciousness of the Ingraham house, but that was a matter of little note to Anna.

Mally was there with a friend whom she had brought home with her to tea. Anna washed the dishes while these two diligently revised the trimming of their hats which in some particular, wholly imperceptible to Anna's untrained eye, fell below the standard of latest fashion.

It was not until the girls left the house, at seven o'clock, and all her duties, trivial and homely and wearying, were done, that Anna, alone at last, could yield to the overpowering weariness which was upon her.

She carried the lamp, whose flame seemed to pierce her aching eyes, into the next room, and then, lying on the hard haircloth sofa with her head propped on one hand, she closed her eyes, thankful at last to be where she could let a few tears fall with no one to wonder or question. The quiet patience inbred in the constitution of the girl's nature controlled her mood; there was no struggle of revolt from the vow she had taken and the future to which she had pledged herself, but an unspeakable homesickness had taken possession of her. She liked and reverenced Keith Burgess, no doubt she would love him very truly by and by, but just now he seemed to have turned her out of her own life and to have taken control where she had hitherto, with God, been supreme. It all gave her the same feeling she had suffered when, after her father's death, they had been obliged to give up their home for the coming in of a new leader for the little flock her father had led so long. She knew there was no real analogy between the two experiences, she

could reason clearly against herself, but she could not control the piteous heart-sickness which settled down upon her in the dim room, in the silent, empty house.

Many women have suffered a reaction like this in the hour of committing themselves, from the fear that this is not the supreme love, the love of the life-time; the misgiving lest this man is not, after all, the man for whom they can forsake all others and unto whom they can cleave with a perfect heart to the end. These were not, however, the considerations which weighed upon Anna Mallison. It was, as she had herself expressed it, very simply, that she had not thought about marriage at all. She had no ideal of manhood in her mind from this point of view. It was not that she craved the love of a stronger man or a man abler or better in any way than Keith Burgess; she merely preferred no man. She had not awakened to love; the deeper forces of her woman's nature were sleeping still.

But there was not for an instant, in Anna's mind, the thought of withdrawing from her plighted word to Keith. She believed that he had come to her, as he believed, under the divine light and leading. She turned to walk in the new path marked out for her, faithfully and obediently, but pausing a moment to look with aching eyes and heart down the dear, familiar path which she was leaving. But Anna was too tired to think long, or even to feel, and so fell asleep shortly, in the stiff, angular position in which she lay, the tears undried upon her cheeks. The sound of the knocker on the house door, hard, metallic, but without resonance, suddenly roused her, and she sprang up hastily, remembering that Mrs. Wilson had gone to the great missionary meeting, and that she was alone in the house.

She took her lamp and went down the narrow stairs into the bit of entry. When she opened the door, Keith Burgess himself was standing there.

He looked at her, smiling half mischievously, and she felt a sudden warmth at her heart as she met the sweet, true look of his eyes.

"Didn't you ever expect to see me again?" he said, and laughed as he stepped into the house and closed the door.

She smiled, too, and held out her hand. He took it and kissed it in a gallant way, which she found wholly wonderful, being quite unused to such feats, and unread in romances.

"It will be a bore, won't it," he went on quaintly, "this having a man around to bother you? Perhaps I ought not to have come, but, you see, I go in the morning, and I thought you might have something to say to me before I left."

"Yes," Anna said; adding naïvely, "but where shall I take you? It is so new. I have not had a call like this before." She felt shy about inviting him up to her own sitting room.

"In there?" he queried, pointing to the door of Mrs. Wilson's drear little closed parlour.

"Oh, no," replied Anna, "Mrs. Wilson never lets us go in there. It is too fine for anything but funerals and—" she was about to say weddings, but broke off confused, and they both laughed, looking at each other like two children with their innocent eyes.

"I can sit here," said Keith, pointing, as he spoke, to the steep, narrow stairs. There was a red and green striped carpet on them, and a strip of grey linen over for protection. The little entry was bare of furniture, save

for the small uncovered table on which Anna had placed her lamp.

"Very well," she said, "I will borrow a chair from Mrs. Wilson's kitchen;" and she forthwith brought out a clean wooden chair painted a light yellow, and placed it at the side of the stairway for herself, there being no room at the foot.

"I was going to say," remarked Keith, musingly, as Anna sat down, "that these stairs are rather wide, and if Mrs. Wilson is particular about lending her chairs, I could make room for you here," and he looked at her soberly between the stair-rails. Anna shook her head, but suddenly there came over them both a sense of the ludicrousness of the little scene they would have presented, had any one been able to look in upon them, and they laughed again, as Anna had not laughed since she was a child, something of exhaustion aiding to break down her wonted restraint.

"It is so funny, oh, it is so funny!" she cried, "to see you looking out between those bars as if you were a lion in a cage. Just think of the people at the meeting! What if they were to see us two. Wouldn't they think it was dreadful?"

"Would you mind putting your hand into the cage?" asked Keith. "I assure you it is perfectly safe. This is not the man-eating variety."

"You are sure?" Anna asked, with a woman's instinctive coquetry swiftly developed, but giving her hand.

"It is such a beautiful hand," he said, laying it very gently on his own right hand, which he had placed on the stair beside him, and at this, the first word of flattery which any man had ever spoken to her face, Anna blushed and grew positively pretty, as he looked at her.

All this laughing and light nonsense between them, did for her what a season of prayer and serious discussion of their situation could not have accomplished. Anna felt, with a sudden sense of comfort and release, that this new relation was not exclusively a solemn religious ordinance, but a dear human companionship, the joyousness of simple, upright hearts, and the sympathy of kindred minds.

CHAPTER XIII

Now die the dream, or come the wife,
The past is not in vain,
For wholly as it was your life
Can never be again,
My dear,
Can never be again.

— W. E. Henley.

At Anna's earnest request, Keith Burgess consented that their engagement should be announced to no one save his mother until spring. Mally observed the regularity of Keith's weekly letters, and attempted to tease Anna into acknowledging that there was "something in it"; but Anna's dignity, which on occasion had its effect even upon Mally's vivacious self-confidence, ended this line of attack in short order. A few weeks after Keith left Burlington Anna received the following note: —

My Dear Miss Mallison: My son, Keith Burgess, has confided in me the fact that you have consented to enter into an understanding with him which, if Providence should favour, will doubtless eventually terminate in marriage. Your name has been mentioned to me by members of our Woman's Foreign Missionary Board, and I am led to believe that my dear son has been graciously led of the Lord in his choice of a companion in the path of duty upon which he has entered. That my son is a godly young

man and of an amiable disposition, I need hardly take this occasion to tell you. Similarity of views and of religious experience would seem to furnish a satisfactory basis for a union productive of mutual good and the glory of God.

Trusting for further acquaintance before you depart for foreign shores,

I am yours very truly,

Sarah Keith Burgess.

If this letter were stiff or cold, Anna, not looking for warmth and freedom, did not miss them. She knew that Keith was the only son of his mother, and she a widow. She took it for granted that they were poor like herself; she had not known many people who were other than poor, none who were in the ranks of missionary candidates. Such a thing would have seemed singularly incongruous because unfamiliar. She had a distinct picture of Mrs. Burgess, whom she knew to be in delicate health, as a woman of sweet, saintly face and subdued manner, living in a small white cottage in an obscure street of Fulham, perhaps not unlike the Burlington street in which Mrs. Wilson's house stood. She fancied her living alone — indeed, Keith had told her that this was so — in a plain and humble fashion, a quiet, devoted, Christian life, a type with which her experience both in Haran and Burlington church circles had made her familiar. There were some geraniums in the little sitting room window, she thought, and it was a sunny room with braided mats over the carpet, and a comfortable cat asleep on a patchwork cushion near the stove. There would be a small stand beside Mrs. Burgess's rocking-chair with a large Bible and a volume or two of Barnes's "Notes," a spec-

tacle case and a box of cough medicine; perhaps it was a bottle, Anna was not sure, but she inclined to the hoarhound drops, and almost smelt them when she thought of the room. She imagined the dear old lady carefully and prayerfully inditing the epistle to herself, and thought it most kind of her, and wrote thus to Keith.

The winter passed for Anna in hard and unintermitting work. Mally allowed herself lighter labours, and, having raised her eyes with admiration to the Rev. Frank Nichols, now shook herself free as far as she could conveniently from her more frivolous Burlington friends, and renewed her earlier interest in religion with extraordinary zeal. She felt that Dr. Harvey's church was too worldly for her ideals, and that Mr. Nichols's beautiful work among the humbler classes offered far more opportunity for religious devotion. Her regular attendance at all the meetings of the church was a great satisfaction to Anna, who looked on with characteristic blindness, glad to see her friend returning to a more consistent walk and conversation.

The letters which passed between Anna and Keith would hardly have been called love-letters. They dealt with religious experience and views of "divine truth," for the most part. Not even at start or finish of any letter was place found for the endearing trifling common to lovers. This correspondence might all have been published, omitting nothing — without dashes or asterisks, even in that day when it was thought unseemly to reveal the innermost secrets of hearts, and to speak upon the housetops that which had been whispered in the ear. There were few personal allusions on the part of either, beyond Keith's occasional mention of his health being below the mark. At Christmas Keith sent Anna a

volume of "Sacred Poetry"; on the fly-leaf he had written: —

ANNA MALLISON,
From her sincere friend and well-wisher,
KEITH BURGESS.

He had abstained from warmer terms on account of Anna's wish to withhold the knowledge of their engagement for the present.

Poor Anna, having nothing wherewith to provide a gift for her lover, the small savings for her education being now nearly exhausted, made shift to sew together sheets of note-paper, on which she copied her favourite passages from Paley and Butler and various theologians. This humble offering was sent to Keith, who was highly gratified, and treasured the little gift affectionately.

For two weeks following Christmas Anna received no letter, but she was not greatly surprised, as she knew Keith was to start early in January for a tour of various New England towns, where he was expected to present the cause of Foreign Missions. He was now completing his last year in the theological seminary near Boston, and his unusual gifts in public speech induced the faculty to send him out frequently on such missions.

At half-past eight of a zero morning in the second week of January, Anna, with her threadbare black jacket buttoned tight to her throat, her arm full of books, was leaving Mrs. Wilson's door on her way to school, when she saw a boy stop in front of the house with a telegram in his hand. Taking it, she found, greatly amazed, that it was for herself — the first telegram she had ever received.

The boy, accustomed to see people receive his mes-

sages with changing colour and nervous hands, glanced at her coolly, then turned and went his way back, plunging his hands into his pockets against the biting cold. In the little entry Anna opened the despatch. It was dated Portland, Maine, and signed by Keith Burgess. It told her that he was very ill; that he was alone, it being impossible for his mother to go to him. It asked her to come to him at once.

Anna's mind, in the half-hour which followed, worked with intense rapidity. She found from a newspaper that by a ten o'clock train she could reach Boston that evening, and she decided to take that train, and go on to Portland by night. She wrote a note to Mally, in which she told her of her engagement to Keith and of what had occurred. She packed a satchel with what was necessary, and last of all drew out of her little square writing-desk, where she kept it carefully locked away, an envelope containing all the ready money she possessed. She found that there remained exactly twelve dollars. This, to Anna, was a large amount of money, and, although her heart sank a little at the thought of spending so much at once, the prospect for the weeks to come before she could draw upon her mother again being blank enough, she knew that this was justified by the emergency.

Soon after nine Anna again departed from the house, the books replaced by the satchel, the worn and faded black gown and jacket unchanged, starting alone and unsped upon her long and anxious journey.

She went first to the Ingrahams, walking the long mile in the sharp cold, carrying her heavy bag with a benumbed hand, since the reckless extravagance of a carriage might not for a moment be considered.

Mrs. Ingraham was ill and could not see Anna, but her daughter Gertrude came into the parlour and greeted her cordially. The issues of the hour were too strong upon Anna to permit any trace of embarrassment or personal feeling in her manner, although she felt that it would have been easier to say what she felt must be said, to Mrs. Ingraham.

"Will you be so good as to tell your mother," she began, "that I could not go away on this journey, which I must take, without explaining it to her? She has been so very kind. We did not mean to announce it quite so soon, but Mr. Burgess, whom I met here in the fall, and I are engaged to be married." Anna was too preoccupied to perceive the flush which slowly and steadily rose in Gertrude Ingraham's face.

"We expect to go out together in May," Anna proceeded. "Mr. Burgess has not been strong for several months, perhaps he is never very strong; but this morning I have a telegram from him asking me to come to Portland, as he is very ill, and his mother cannot be with him."

"Shall you go, Miss Mallison?" asked Gertrude, with visible constraint.

Anna looked at her then, surprised, and instantly felt the indefinable coldness of her reception of her little story.

"I am on my way to take the ten o'clock train east," she said simply, her voice faltering slightly. For all her courage and steadiness, her heart was crying out for a little touch of another woman's gentleness; the way before her was not easy, and there was a sense of loneliness upon her which began to make itself acutely felt.

Gertrude Ingraham rose and said: —

"I am so very sorry for Mr. Burgess. We liked him

very much. You must let me go and speak to mamma a moment, for I know she would wish to give you some message. I will not keep you long." And she hurried from the room.

Anna sat alone and watched the minute-hand of a French clock on the mantel moving slowly along the gilded dial, a heavy oppression on her spirit. She had not consciously expected sympathy, but Gertrude's aloofness hurt her strangely.

Some one came softly into the room behind her just then, so softly that she turned rather because she felt a presence than because she heard a step. It was Oliver Ingraham.

The peculiar personality of this mysterious man inspired Anna always with an aversion hardly less than terror, and although she had become familiar with his presence in her frequent visits, it had never become less painful to her. Indeed, latterly, a new element of discomfort had been added to her feeling toward him, since he had shown a marked disposition to follow her about, and intrude a manner of unpleasant gallantry upon her.

He greeted her now almost effusively, and, perceiving that she was prepared as if for a journey, asked at once: —

"Not going away? The painful hour of parting is not here yet, surely?"

Anna made a vague and hurried reply.

"Because, you know," pursued Oliver, lowering his voice to an offensive tone of familiarity, and maliciously mimicking the phraseology of his stepmother's friends, "we could hardly spare our dear young sister yet; she is becoming really indispensable to us," and he held out one long hand as if to clasp that of Anna, leering at her repulsively.

Anna rose hurriedly and moved away from him, her heart beating hard with fear and antipathy. To her great relief she heard Gertrude Ingraham's step in the hall, and Anna, with her face paler than it had been, met her at the door, while Oliver slunk away to a little distance, and appeared to be looking out of a window unconcernedly.

Gertrude Ingraham carried a pocket-book open in her hand, and as she spoke she looked at it, and not at Anna.

"Mamma is so very sorry, and sends her best wishes and hopes for Mr. Burgess's quick recovery. She hopes you will let her know; and, Miss Mallison," Gertrude was evidently embarrassed, "mamma says it is such a long and expensive journey, and she wishes you would just take this with you to make everything as comfortable as may be." And she drew out a crisp twenty-dollar note, which she essayed to put in Anna's hand.

Anna had not known before that she was proud. She did not know it now, but Gertrude Ingraham did, and was touched with keen compunction. She understood that her mother would have been more successful.

It was only the swift, unconscious protest of Anna's hand, the pose of her head as she turned to go, and the quiet finality with which she said: —

"Will you thank Mrs. Ingraham for me, and say I did not need it? She is always kind. Good-by."

A moment later Gertrude watched from the window the slender figure in its faded, scanty black, with the heavy, old-fashioned satchel, passing down the wind-swept lawn, under the grey and bitter sky.

Within was warmth and luxury and protection, and yet Gertrude's heart leaped with a strong passion of

desire to forego all this and take Anna Mallison's place, that so she might start on that long journey which should bring her, at its end, to the side of Keith Burgess.

Small, unseen tragedies in women's lives such as this, never once, perhaps, expressed, and never forgotten, work out the heroic hypocrisies which women learn, since such is their allotted part.

"You might have known better than to offer money to that girl," Oliver's high, shrill voice behind Gertrude said. "She's as confoundedly proud as all the other saints. But she'll have to come down yet. We shall see some day."

Thus unpleasantly interrupted in her reverie, Gertrude rose impatiently, and left the room.

It was eight o'clock that evening when Anna reached Boston. Dismayed by the small remainder of money left her after her railway ticket was bought, she had not dared to spend anything for food through all the day, and had tried to think the cold, dry bread, a few slices of which she had put into her satchel, was sufficient for her needs.

In Boston a change of stations made a cab a necessity if she would not lose the Portland train, and this she must not do, since she had telegraphed Keith from Burlington that she would be with him in the morning. Anna alighted at the station of the Maine Railroad and heard the cabman say that his fee was two dollars with a sensation hardly less than terror. She paid him without a word, then entering the station, sat down in the glare of light amid the confusion of the moving crowd, and looked into her poor little purse, a sharp contraction at her throat as she counted, and found less than three dollars left.

The train would leave in fifteen minutes. Anna went with as brave a face as she could manage, to the office, and asked what was the fare to Portland. The curt reply of the agent proved the glaring insufficiency of her small remaining store. Trembling with weakness and dismay, Anna turned back to her place and sat down, closing her eyes while she prayed. She had friends in missionary circles in Boston, who would gladly have lent her money, but time failed to seek them out. She thought, as she prayed, of the money which Gertrude Ingraham had proffered in the morning, and, humbled, asked forgiveness for the ignorance and pride which had led her to reject it. The thought of Keith watching, perhaps in vain, for her coming in his loneliness and great need, perhaps in his extremity, overwhelmed her with pity and penitence. Having prayed for forgiveness and for guidance, and for a way out, and a way to Keith that night, she opened her eyes, astonished for the moment at the harsh light and the motley scene about her, her actual surroundings having been for the time forgotten in the complete abstraction of her mind. She gazed for a few moments languidly before her, her face so colourless and sorrowful that many persons who passed her looked back at her in curiosity and concern. Presently the space before her became clear; there was a pause in the fluctuating course of passers-by, and nothing interposed, for the instant, between her and the window of the ticket office.

An elderly gentleman in a long travelling cloak and silk hat, carrying a snug and shiny travelling bag, came up to the window with the confident and assured bearing of the experienced traveller. Anna heard him ask for a ticket to Portland. She recognized him at once, for it

was Dr. Durham, the missionary secretary who had once been her father's guest.

When he turned from the window, the doctor found the pale, quiet girl in black standing just behind him; she spoke to him with a radiant light in her face, such as he had never met before. To herself, Anna was saying with a sense of exquisite joy in her heart, "God is near," feeling herself close touched by the Almightiness. To her father's friend she told her story and her need in few words, without hesitation or doubt, declaring, necessarily, her engagement to Keith Burgess, and the fact that she was hastening to reach him on account of his serious illness.

"Amazing, my dear," exclaimed Dr. Durham, taking off his hat and wiping the large shining baldness of his head, "amazing indeed! I am myself on my way to Burgess, and we can make the journey together. Poor fellow! It is a sad case. I had a telegram yesterday, but it was impossible to start until to-night. It seems he has had a hemorrhage. But we will talk all this over on the way," and the good old gentleman made haste to buy Anna's ticket, which he said it was only the part of the Society to do, and she must never mention it again. This done, they hastened on together to the train.

CHAPTER XIV

How true it is that our destinies are decided by nothings, and that a small imprudence helped by some insignificant accident, as an acorn is fertilized by a drop of rain, may raise the tree on which perhaps we and others shall be crucified. . . .

Poor, sorely tried Faith ! She has but one way out of the difficulty — the word Mystery. It is in the origins of things that the great secret of destiny lies hidden, although the breathless sequence of after events has often many surprises for us too. — AMIEL.

THE incredible luxury of her breakfast the next morning in the hotel in Portland made an impression upon Anna which she could never forget, since she was, in fact, very nearly starved. The rich coffee, the delicate and sumptuous food, the noiseless assiduity of the sleek black waiters, the great glittering room, all partook of the marvellous to her exhausted senses.

Then she was conducted through endless passages where her feet trod in baffling silence upon the lanes of thick crimson carpet, for a few moments she was alone in a room to bathe and prepare herself, and then a low-voiced woman, stout and motherly, met her at the door, and she was led to Keith.

He was lying, fully dressed, on a broad velvet sofa, in a richly furnished room, which was full of flowers, and bright with the light of the snowy winter morning and a blazing wood fire. His eyes were luminous, his colour better than she had known it, and he did not look ill. The nurse left them alone, and they met with unfeigned but quiet happiness.

" Was I selfish to ask you to come this long journey,

just for me?" Keith asked anxiously, holding her hands. Anna found his hot and tremulous, and soothed them with a slow, strong motion of her own.

"No, not selfish," she said.

"You see, I am not very ill; in fact, I am sure the worst is over now, and I shall be just as well as ever in a few weeks; but I had a terrible cold and coughing so there was a little hemorrhage, — simply from the throat, we understand it now, — but at the time the doctor himself was alarmed, and so was I. If I had known how slight an affair it really was, I should not have asked so much of you, but I cannot be sorry, Anna. I shall have to stay right here for several weeks, they say, and it will be everything to have you near me, don't you see?"

"I am most grateful to be with you, Keith."

"And will you talk to me about India, and about our home there? I have thought of it so continually since I have been sick. It almost seems as if I had seen it, and you in it. I love it already, Anna. Please say that you do too, just a little."

"Tell me about it. Of course I shall love it."

"It is all made of bamboo, you know, the house, and perched up in the air, and there are great, wide rooms, with cool shade, and a sound of water flowing; there are broad bamboo lattices at the windows, and it is still and peaceful, and the servants go about softly, and you are there in a white dress, Anna, — oh, how I want to see you in that white dress! It has tiny borders of gilt and coloured embroidery, and it suits you so much better than this hard black gown. Will you have a dress made soon like that?"

Anna smiled and pressed her hand over Keith's eyes,

which were full of childish imploring. She was beginning to see his weakness with a new pain at her heart.

She sat with him an hour, and then, the doctor coming in, she was sent to her room to sleep until noon, while Keith should rest, and have an interview with Dr. Durham, their fatherly friend.

When Anna reached her room, she found on a table a large jar of roses, rich in colour and fragrance, and a basket of hothouse grapes. The day was bitterly cold, and it was snowing hard, the thick snowflakes melting against the broad, thick glass of her window.

The extravagant luxury of such fruit and flowers in this depth of midwinter astonished and disturbed her. There was no one of whom she could ask questions, but how could it be right for Keith to spend so much money? To remain for weeks in such a hotel as this seemed to Anna to involve an impossible expenditure, and she lay down on the great luxurious bed with a bewildering confusion of questions to which no answers were forthcoming. From the pinching cold and hunger of yesterday to the luxurious ease of to-day was like the transformation of a fairy tale; and Keith, with his weak hands, and his bright eyes, and his wistful eagerness was formidable in his appeal to her. She did not know what might be coming, but she felt anew that she had surrendered herself and was pledged now to do another's will.

At noon Anna had a moment's conference with Keith's physician. He assured her that there was a remarkable change for the better in his patient, — in fact, that he looked now for a speedy convalescence, adding that her coming had produced a most favourable effect.

The whole afternoon of that January day, Keith and

Anna were left alone together. The nurse, glad of a brief release, took her "afternoon out"; the various doctors of medicine and divinity betook themselves to other places; and word was given the page that Mr. Burgess could not receive visitors, so that flowers and cards accumulated, and interruptions were postponed. There was justice in what Keith said, that they had never yet had a chance to get acquainted, and now the afternoon was turned to good account.

Experience and instinct made Anna a nurse. Keith was sure he had never been so wholly comfortable as she made him, and the effect of her personal presence was like health and healing to him.

"How dear you are, Anna, and how absolutely necessary to me," he said fondly, as he watched her quiet way of preparing his food and medicine. "I foresee plainly that I can never let you leave me."

When twilight gathered and the room grew dusky, they had no lights, but sat by the fire, Anna on a low seat beside the sofa, and silence fell. When Keith spoke again, his voice betrayed a rising emotion, and an appeal before which she trembled within herself.

"Anna," he said, "why should you leave me again? Why need we be separated any more? I need you. I can get strong far faster with you beside me, for you inspire me with a new life. Everything seems sure and strong when you are with me. But I want you wholly mine without fear or favour. Marry me, dear, to-night, to-morrow! What have we to wait for? It is only three months before our marriage was to be, you know."

Concealing her agitation, and speaking quite steadily and soothingly, Anna answered: —

"But you know, Keith, I must go back in a few

weeks, and finish my work in the school and hospital. I have still so much to learn before I can make a really useful missionary, and so little time before May to learn it in. You know I have cut my preparation short a year, now, so that we may go out together. I am sure we ought to wait until May."

"Oh, Anna!"

The words, so spoken, had all the force of an inarticulate cry from the man's heart. They told what hours of argument and pleading could not have conveyed, — the yearning need for her presence and her upholding. Anna lifted her eyes to Keith's, and saw that they were dim with tears. She did not feel them to be unmanly tears, knowing his physical exhaustion, and they moved her profoundly. She rose and walked to the window, looking out into the snowy street. Again that sense that her life was taken out of her own hands came upon her; she felt like those of old who feared as they entered into the cloud. She feared, but, nevertheless, she went back to Keith, and said, very gently, but without hesitation: —

"If we should be married to-morrow night, would that please you, Keith?"

He caught her hand and pressed it to his cheek with pathetic eagerness.

"Oh, my girl, am I wrong to move you to do this for my sake? Forgive me, leave me, if I am leading you faster, farther, than you wish to go."

"I will not leave you, Keith," Anna replied, taking her low seat again at his side, "never, any more. It is the will of God."

The next day Keith was much stronger. He was able to walk about the room, to sit up for an hour at a

time, and to talk and plan to his heart's desire. His spirits were high, and he was full of irrepressible happiness, and yet a wistful, grateful question always rose in his eyes when they rested upon Anna. The marriage was arranged to take place in Keith's room at six o'clock. Dr. Durham had consented to remain and perform the ceremony, returning to Boston that night. Keith's physician had interposed no objection to the plan, and even regarded the inevitable excitement as likely to be a benefit rather than an injury to his patient.

"He needs you, Miss Mallison," he remarked with an emphasis which Anna felt to be peculiarly significant, finding him a man of few words.

It was five o'clock, and Anna had gone to her room to make ready for the ceremony. At Keith's urgent desire, and by the aid of one of the many efficient friends whom the circumstances of his illness had gathered around him, a white dress had been ordered for her. She found it now, lying in delicate tissue wrappings upon her bed, and beside it a box of orange flowers whose fragrance filled the room.

She was becoming a little inured to luxury; colour, warmth, perfume, delight to sense, seemed here to be the natural order. A vague perplexity lay below it all, but she had ceased now to ask questions.

As she bent to take her wedding-gown from its wrappings, some one knocked at her door. It was Dr. Durham. There was a shade of anxiety upon his kind old face, and he asked her to come with him into an alcove at the end of the hall. With an uneasy stirring at her heart, Anna followed him. Keith's physician was standing by a table in the alcove, evidently awaiting them.

Anna looked into his face, waiting without speaking

for what he might have to say. Surely it was impossible that Keith could be worse; it was not ten minutes since she left him.

"Miss Mallison," said the doctor, gravely, "I have been having a little conference with your friend, Dr. Durham, and we find that there is a chance that you may be under some misapprehension of the actual conditions under which — under which you are about to take an important step."

"I did not understand it myself, my dear girl, until within the last hour," interposed Dr. Durham; "and I really don't know now what we ought to do. Still, perfect frankness, perfect understanding, you know, may be better for all parties."

The good old man was visibly oppressed with the burden of the part he had to bear in the interview. Motionless Anna stood, only turning her eyes from one man to the other in troubled wonder.

"The facts are simply these," the physician took up the word again, "and I am greatly surprised, and I may add greatly pained, that they have not apparently been understood before. Mr. Burgess will recover from this attack, and may have years yet of moderate health, but as for carrying out his purpose to go out as a foreign missionary, it is absolutely impossible. Such a course would simply be suicidal, and must not be considered for a moment."

"Not now, perhaps," Anna spoke very low, in a strange, muffled tone; "but it may be — later — ?" and she turned her imploring eyes from the face of one man to the other.

"To be perfectly frank, my dear," said Dr. Durham, pressing his hands nervously together, "after what the

doctor has told me of the condition of our dear friend, the organic difficulty, and all that, you see — I fear that I can only, in justice to all concerned, state plainly that our Board would not be justified in sending him. I assure you the blow is a severe one to me in my capacity as secretary; for we regard Keith Burgess as, perhaps, the most promising candidate who has ever come before us. It is a dark Providence, and you will believe me that only a sense of our duty in the matter has led us to put the case so plainly before you."

Anna did not speak.

"I was not aware, Miss Mallison," said the physician, "until an hour ago, that you were yourself under appointment as a missionary. When I learned this fact, it seemed to me that you should not enter upon the proposed line of action without knowing clearly that it involves giving up your chosen career," and with these words the doctor bowed and turned to withdraw.

Anna turned to Dr. Durham.

"Mr. Burgess does not know that he must give up — ?" she asked.

"No, oh, no," was the reply; "the doctor says that he must on no account be allowed to learn it until he is stronger. His heart is so entirely bound up in this noble purpose, that the blow will be a terrible one when it comes."

"We must wait, Miss Mallison, until he is as far as may be recovered, before we allow him to even suspect the actual state of the case;" the doctor added this, looking at Anna's face with surprise and concern. "If I can serve you in any way, do not fail to call upon me. For the present I must say good evening," and he hastened away.

Dr. Durham followed, walking along the hall by his side. The look in Anna's face awed him. He felt that it was not his right to share in an hour of such conflict as this bade fair to be to her, for he perceived already something of what her missionary vocation meant to her. Anna, however, did not notice that he had gone; the crisis was too great to permit her paying heed to the accidental circumstances around her. A voice in her heart seemed crying with constant iteration, "Father! Father! What does God mean?"

For ten minutes Anna stood alone in the alcove, looking steadily before her, but in her bewildered pain seeing no outward thing, while in the far dim reaches of the hall the good old clergyman paced noiselessly to and fro.

On one side Anna saw her father's life, with all its deep renunciation, its pure aims, its defeat, and its one final hope of fulfilment in herself; she saw the look in his eyes as he bent above her in the little church that night, when she declared her purpose to become a missionary; she remembered his *Nunc Dimittis* as he blessed her with dying eyes; she lived again through the solemn hour of dedication, just after her father's death, when the sense came upon her that she was called of God to carry on what her father began, to be in herself the continuance, and through divine grace the fruition, of his life. Since that hour life had meant only one thing to Anna; no other purpose or desire had ever entered to divide or diminish its control over her: she was set apart to carry the gospel of Christ to the heathen; this one thing only would she do.

This on the one side, strong as life itself, inwoven into the very texture of her soul and her consciousness.

On the other side Keith Burgess, even now scarcely better than a stranger, and yet, by the will of God as she believed, bound to her by sacred and indissoluble vows. To be faithful to those vows, to save him from despair, perhaps from death, she must cut off all her past, must read her life all backward, must annul and declare vain and void the most solemn purposes of her soul.

From his retreat, watching, Dr. Durham at length saw Anna advancing down the hall toward the door of her room. He met her there, a question he did not dare to speak in his tired, kind old eyes. Her face was as the face of one who has even in the moment received a spiritual death-blow.

He held his watch in his hand. Without speaking, Anna motioned to him, and he replied : —

"It is nearly half past five, my dear."

"Very well," she said, her voice dull and toneless; "I will be ready at six o'clock."

As if in a dream she prepared herself for her marriage. She moved as if in response to another will than her own; her own will seemed to lie dead before her, a visible, tangible thing, done to death by her own hand. The white gown, Keith's gift, seemed less a wedding-garment than a burial robe, and a strange smile crossed her face when she caught her reflection in the glass, and saw that, save for her eyes, her face was wholly colourless, the pale flowers on her breast hardly paler, hardly colder.

At the clock-striking of the appointed hour, Anna entered the room, and, taking her place beside Keith, whose face was full of tender gladness, she lifted her eyes steadily to the old clergyman's face, listening as for life and death to his words.

"In sickness and in health, . . . for richer for poorer, . . . and forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him." Yes, all others. God only knew the significance of those words, for they seemed to mean God himself just then; but God would pity. He would help. Her response came low but unfaltering, and then, with bowed heads, standing side by side in their youth, their innocence, their patience of hope, they two listened solemnly to the last irrevocable words.

So steadfastly Anna held herself until the end, but hardly had the final word of blessing been pronounced, when, with a low cry for help, she wavered as she stood, and fell fainting.

BOOK II

AFTERNOON

Hear now our cry for strength to bear the weight of prayers unanswered.
— MAARTEN MAARTENS.

CHAPTER XV

The evil base of our society eats right through ; that our wealthy homes are founded on the spoliation of the poor vitiates all the life that goes on within them. Somehow or other, it searches through and degrades the art, manners, dress, good taste of the inmates. — Edward Carpenter.

It was a month later, when a train from the east, entering the Fulham station at five o'clock of the February afternoon, brought Keith Burgess and his wife home.

Keith was apparently in fairly good physical condition, and looked and carried himself much as he had when Anna first knew him, although she could now detect the underlying weakness which he strove hard to conceal. He had been told in due time of what was involved in his illness. The shock had been severe both to mind and body, and for a while a serious relapse had seemed imminent. Those days had brought the young wife and husband into a new union of sympathy and suffering, as each strove to bear the burden of their thwarted lives bravely for the other's sake. Not at that time nor at any later period was it possible for Anna to let Keith know to the full the meaning of this renunciation to her. He knew that to her, as to him, the abandonment of the missionary purpose was a profound and poignant sorrow ; he did not know that it was the overthrow of all that had made her life hitherto, and that, whatever new forces and motives might produce out of the elements of her character, the old life, the first Anna Mallison, was slain.

Keith had told her little of what lay before them in his mother's home, which was now to be theirs; they had been too deeply absorbed in the present emergency to take much thought for the future. This much, however, had been accomplished in a week's sojourn in Boston: Keith would shortly be appointed to fill a missionary secretaryship, which involved much travel and speaking in the interests of the cause, but permitted him to make his residence in Fulham. The strong hope which Anna clung to silently for herself, as the last pitiful substitute for the calling now denied her, was that she, too, might still accomplish something for the work so urgent in its claims upon her, by presenting it, as occasion offered, among Christian women in her own land. But she knew that her life was no longer in her own hands to shape and direct as she might will; not only was Keith now to be her care, her chief concern and interest, but she looked forward to daughterly duties toward his invalid mother, to whom it was in her mind to minister with loving and faithful devotion.

As the train now drew into the Fulham station, Keith remarked, casually: —

"There's Foster, all right. I knew he would be on hand." And, looking from the car platform, Anna saw a grey-haired man-servant in plain livery, who saluted Keith respectfully as he hastened to the spot, and wore an expression of solicitude and responsibility which stamped him at once as an old family servant. As they gave over their hand luggage to this man, and followed him out to the street where a plain closed carriage stood in waiting, an unostentatious "B" on the door showing it to be private, a deep perplexity and confusion began to rise in Anna's mind. She had gradually become accus-

tomed to the luxuries of the life in the Portland hotel, and had regarded them as incident to the passage of a grave crisis, and justified, perhaps, by the necessities of the case; but she had not been interested in thinking farther along the line of the Burgesses' worldly status, least of all minded to make it a matter of inquiry, consequently the sight of the man-servant and the family carriage smote her with a sharp sense of entering a new and undreamed-of outward life. In them was the first obvious token which had ever been given her of her husband's home surroundings and worldly position. A vague anxiety and dread were awakened in Anna by these small signs of a life and habit so widely at variance with her own past of austere privation. She saw the low white cottage figured heretofore in her thought, in the narrow street, fading before her; the geraniums in the window, the cat on the cushion, the braided mats, the wooden rocking-chair, the little table with the Bible and cough-drops, wavered in all their outlines, and fell like a house of cards. How would it be with the figure of the sweet, saintly, patient invalid to whom she was to minister? Must that go too? Anna ceased to speculate, but she sat silent beside her husband, and her heart beat hard.

When the carriage stopped, it was in a fine old quiet street lined with substantial dwellings, and before a large brick house painted a dull drab. The house stood with its broad, low front close to the street; there were many small-paned, shining windows, and a brass knocker on the panelled black front door. Nothing could have been plainer or less pretentious, and yet the house bore, to Anna's first intuitive perception, its own unmistakable expression of decorous and inflexible dignity and quietly cherished family pride.

As they entered the wide, low-ceiled, oak-wainscoted hall, a neatly dressed middle-aged woman advanced and, speaking in a low voice to Anna, asked if she would follow her up to her rooms, Keith introducing her pleasantly as his mother's indispensable Jane. No one else was in sight; but Mrs. Burgess's invalid condition seemed to account sufficiently for this, although Anna had supposed her able to move about the house, and even to go out under favouring conditions.

Keith joined Anna on the stairs, taking her hand in his. He smiled tenderly as he looked into her face, but there was a nervous eagerness upon him which he could not conceal. Was he thinking that he had chosen his wife for far other scenes and a widely different life? She could not tell.

"This was my old room, Anna," Keith was saying now, as they stood in the doorway of a spacious bedroom with old-fashioned mahogany furniture and handsome but faded chintz hangings. There was a marble chimney-piece, over which hung a large picture of Keith, with a boyish, eager face.

Jane now threw open a door from this room into another of equal size.

"If you please, I was to tell you this is to be Mrs. Burgess's own sitting room," she said respectfully, "and the dressing room and bath beyond the bedroom will be for your own use entirely after this," and she crossed to open another door.

Keith drew Anna on into the sitting room.

"Well, now, this is certainly very kind of my mother," he said, a flush of grateful pleasure rising in his sensitive face. "See, Anna, this has always been the state apart-

ment, the guest-chamber of the house, and she has had it refitted for our use."

"How very kind," said Anna, warmly.

The room was, indeed, in its own manner, grave and subdued, a luxurious parlour, with good pictures, handsome hangings, and soft, pale-tinted carpet.

"I must go down at once and tell the dear mother how we thank her," said Keith, and Anna, left alone, returned to the bedroom and began to remove her travelling hat.

Jane was beside her at once, giving unneeded assistance.

"Shall I unpack for you directly?" she asked, looking at Keith's small trunk, which was quite adequate to Anna's few belongings, added to her husband's. Anna felt her colour deepen as she declined the offered help, and sat down with a little sigh in a great easy-chair. But she submitted perforce when the maid knelt at her feet, and, quite as a matter of course, removed her shoes. It was the first time since babyhood that this office had been performed for Anna by other hands than her own, and she felt all her veins tingle with a shy reluctance, but sat motionless.

Rising, Jane looked about, Anna thought with a shade of dissatisfaction that there was thus far so little to be done, so scanty a display of the small belongings of luxury.

"When you are ready to dress for dinner," she said, with a touch of coldness, "I will come if you will just ring the bell. The bell is here," and she indicated the green twisted cord and heavy silk tassel at the head of the bed. "Mrs. Burgess said she could spare me to wait on you for what you needed to-night," she added.

"Thank you," said Anna, gently, but with the quiet unconscious loftiness of her own reserve. "Mrs. Burgess is very good to think of it, but I am accustomed to caring for myself, and so I shall not need to trouble you."

"Very well, that will be just as suits you, ma'am. I should be pleased to wait on you any time Mrs. Burgess doesn't need me. Dinner will be at six o'clock, then, if you please." Thus saying the maid withdrew.

"Keith," said Anna, with a perplexed countenance, when a few moments later he joined her, "I find I ought to dress for dinner, but I have nothing better to wear than this black gown. You ought to have told me, dear."

Keith looked down at the straight fashionlessness of Anna's black figure with unconcealed concern.

"I ought to have thought," he said, "but it never occurred to me about your clothes. We must get you a whole lot of new things straight away, dear. We will do it together, and have a great time over it, won't we? And you will put off the black now for my sake? I want to see you in wine-red silk and good lace."

"Oh, Keith!" cried Anna, "I cannot imagine myself masquerading like that. It would never do. But for to-night — that is the trouble now."

"Why, wear your wedding-gown, sweetheart; that is just the thing. What luck that we did get that!" and Keith was down on his knees before the trunk on the instant, and soon produced the dress which, being of fine white cashmere, with a little lace about the neck, was, in fact, altogether appropriate.

Anna looked puzzled. It seemed to her almost sacrilegious to put on that dress for everyday use, and

the association with it made her shiver, even now, but she did not dispute the matter.

Just before six o'clock Keith ushered his wife into the library downstairs, where his mother sat waiting to receive them. It was the sort of a library which Anna had read of but had not seen — lined with books, furnished with massive leather-covered chairs and darkly gleaming mahogany, a dim old India carpet on the floor.

Anna saw by the shaded drop-light the form of a small woman of fragile figure, dressed in silver-grey silk, with a white shawl of cobweb fineness of texture about her shoulders. There were several good diamonds at her throat and on her hands, her grey hair was beautifully dressed in soft waves and fastened with a quaint silver comb of fine workmanship. Her face was pale and the features delicately cut; her movement as she advanced to meet Anna was slow, and, in spite of her diminutive size, stately, and there was a crisp, frosty rustle of her grey gown.

She took both Anna's hands in hers with a cold, kind smile, and kissed her twice on her forehead, Anna bending low for the purpose. She seemed to be at an incalculable height above the fine little lady, and singularly young and immature. At twenty-two she had felt herself a woman for long years, with her sober cares and grave purposes; but to-night, before Keith's mother, she suddenly seemed to become a shy, undeveloped girl again.

While they spoke a little of the journey and the night, Keith Burgess turned on his heel and affected to be examining, with critical interest, an engraving above the fireplace, which he had seen in the same spot all his life; but he was watching them both aside narrowly as he stood. He was perfectly satisfied.

If Anna had been never so much prettier, and possessed of all of Mally Loveland's confident social facility; if she had met his mother as the country girl of this type would have done, with eager and affectionate appeal that she should at once stand and deliver motherly sympathy and affection in copious measure,—there would have been only disappointment and chagrin. But Mrs. Burgess's bearing was not more reserved than that of her daughter-in-law. At twenty-two Anna's grave repose of manner was in itself a distinction, and one which had its full weight with the elder woman. Plainly, she had not a gushing provincial beauty on her hands to curb and fashion into form. As for good looks, there was a certain angular grace already in figure, an unconscious dignity of attitude and bearing which suited Keith's mother, while for her face, the eyes were good, the brow very noble, and the expression peculiarly lofty. The succession of strong and sudden emotional experiences through which Anna had recently passed had wrought a subtle change already in her face; there was less severity, less of hard, conscientious rigour in its lines; a certain transparent, spiritual illumination softened the profound sadness which was her habitual expression.

At dinner, a delicately sumptuous meal, served with some state, Anna acquitted herself perfectly, having the instincts of good breeding, the habit of delicate refinement, and having learned at Mrs. Ingraham's table many of the small niceties which she could hardly have acquired in Haran.

Already, within the first hour, while seeing that her mother-in-law had been physically entirely able to meet her children at her door at their home-coming, Anna perceived the inevitable consistency of her waiting to

receive them in due form and order. Formality and form were essentials of life in this house. This did not oppress Anna particularly, and she liked to look at the cameo-cut delicacy of Mrs. Burgess's face. Still, perhaps never in her life, never in the cheerless chambers of Mrs. Wilson's poor house, had Anna known the homesickness with which she ate and drank — that night at her husband's table.

Poverty and obscurity were old and tried friends to Anna; among them she would have been at home. From wealth and social prominence she shrank with instinctive dread and ingrained disfavour. The familiar austerities of poverty were, to her, denotements of mental elevation, while the indulgences of wealth bore to her thought an almost vulgar pampering of appetite and ministering to sense. The trained perfection of the silent attentive service in itself was an offence to her. Why should those people be turned into speechless automatons to watch every wish and wait upon every need of three other people no more deserving than themselves? Could it ever seem right to her?

She excused herself early. Left alone with him, Mrs. Burgess laid her small hand on Keith's, saying without warmth but with significant emphasis: —

"You have done very well, Keith, in marrying Miss Mallison. I confess I was not without some apprehension lest the wife who would have been a perfect helpmeet and companion for you in the foreign field might appear at some disadvantage in the life now before you in the ordering of Providence."

"Anna is so absolutely true, mother, that she cannot be a misfit anywhere, except among false conditions."

Mrs. Burgess bowed her head.

"I can see that she is a thoroughly exemplary young woman, and while she may have much to learn of social conditions in a place like Fulham, the foundation is all right." She paused a little, and added reflectively: "Her eyes and hands are extremely good. Her figure will improve. I understand that her father belonged to the Andover Mallisons."

There was a little flicker of Keith's eyelids, but he made no reply, taking up casually from the table a book at which he looked with mechanical indifference. It was a volume of Barnes's "Notes." This much only of Anna's vision had had foundation.

CHAPTER XVI

For the most part people do not think at all. They have little phrases and formulas which stand in their minds for thoughts and opinions, and they repeat them parrotlike. Most of their notions and ideas and prejudices are mere extraneous accretions, barnacled on to them by men and books in their passage through life, as shells are on a vessel, but not growing out of them or really belonging to them. — ANON.

Life in her creaking shoes
Goes, and more formal grows,
A round of calls and cues.

— W. E. HENLEY.

AT the end of the week, on Saturday morning, Anna Burgess was sitting on a low stool in the middle of her bedroom, surrounded by a curious confusion and medley of miscellaneous things. Before her was an open cedar chest of large proportions; its pungent odour was mingled with the spicy smell of winter apples, dried fruits, and maple sugar. From the half unpacked chest, quilts of calico patchwork and soft home-woven blankets were overflowing; piles of snowy linen sheets and pillow-cases, finely hemstitched and bordered with delicate thread-work, lay about the floor, together with body linen of equal daintiness, and books in dull and faded binding, while the red apples, rolled everywhere, studded the confused array as commas do a printer's page.

In the chest still lay some old-fashioned furs and other clothing. Anna, as she sat, had her lap heaped with a quantity of yellowed lace, and a number of small, thin silver spoons. She was reading a letter, and, as she read, unconsciously tears were running down her cheeks.

"You must have known," wrote Gulielma Mallison, "that I could not let my dear daughter go empty-handed to her new home. The box has been long, however, in being made ready, but I know your husband and his mother will make excuses, the marriage having been so sudden. Lucia and I have taken comfort in sorting out and preparing the things. The linen is, much of it, what was left of my own bridal outfit, but we have bleached it on the snow, and it is still strong. The silver I have tried to divide equally among you all. This is your portion. The little porringer, you know, came over from Germany with my mother, then the Jungfrau Benigna von Brosius.

"I regret that I am unable to provide you with more dresses, etc., but there is little to do with and little to choose from in Haran. Indeed, I hardly ever get to Haran any more, my rheumatism is so bad, and the going has been terrible this winter. We got Lucia's husband's sister to buy the white cotton cloth, and sent it back by Joseph when he went down with a load of wood. The brown cloak I shall not be likely to need any more, going out so seldom, and Lucia says she doesn't begrudge it to you at all, being much too long for her, and it would be a shame to cut off any of that material to waste. You know it is the best of camlet cloth, and there is no wear out to it. I have given Lucia the melodeon, and she says it is only fair that you should have the cloak and the brown silk dress. We got Amanda Turner to make that over for you by an old waist we had of yours. She was here three days, right through the worst snowstorm we have had all winter, and there was nothing to interrupt us. We turned the silk and made it all over. I think we succeeded pretty well.

I thought you really ought to have one silk dress, now you are going to live in this country. Of course you'll be invited out to tea some, there in Fulham. The grey merino will do for afternoons. I made you four aprons, two white, and two check to wear about your work, and you'll need them afternoons for taking care of your husband's mother. Please give her my best respects. I send the dried fruit to her, — maybe it will tempt her appetite a little, — and part of the maple sugar, that in the little cakes. Lucia ran it for her especially. We thought maybe they wouldn't have it down there in Fulham, that was pure.

"I am sorry we haven't anything better to send Mr. Burgess, but I put in your dear father's quilted dressing-gown as my particular present; his health being so poor, Lucia and I thought it might be acceptable. The books are for him, from your father's library. . . ."

The letter dropped in Anna's lap, and covering her face with both hands, she burst into passionate tears. Her old life, in all its homely, simple sweetness called her mightily, and the sharp sense of her own separation from it now and forever tore her heart. Her mother's inability to comprehend the new conditions, the eager self-sacrifice which had gladly shorn her own poor life bare of every lingering superfluity of possession that she might equip her child with such small dower as was attainable, had to Anna a pathos which seemed almost too poignant to endure. How well, oh, how well she understood the planning and contriving, the simple joy in each small new object gained; the delight which her mother and Lucia had shared in picturing to themselves her own grateful surprise in the manifold treasures stored in the dear old chest, itself an heirloom of impressive

value in the Mallison family. And she was grateful beyond words to tell, and pleased and proud to come thus set out to her husband; and yet, these possessions, so unspeakably precious to her, would, she knew only too well, wear a rustic and incongruous aspect in the Burgess household. She knew that Keith and his mother would be gentle and respectful in thought as in word, but she knew the faint embarrassment which they would try to conceal in receiving gifts for which they would have no use; she knew the delicate, half-pitying, well-meaning sympathy, which could never understand, try as it would.

On Sunday morning, Anna attended church with her husband and his mother for the first time, the latter making a great effort, since church-going was far beyond her usual invalid routine. When Anna presented herself in the hall ready to start, Mrs. Burgess, or Madam Burgess as she was generally styled after this time, had bit her lip and almost gasped, such was her amazement and dismay. However, she had said nothing, the situation being plainly hopeless, and she sat in the carriage in speechless anxiety, while Keith's face reflected the same emotion. He had felt it impossible to interfere with Anna's arraying herself as she had for church, seeing with his sensitive perception that the garments fashioned and sent her from her home by the hands of her mother and sister, for such a time as this, were in her eyes sacredly beyond criticism or cavil.

Anna now preceded him, following his mother, down the broad aisle of the stately and well-filled church, drawing to herself unconsciously the attention of many eyes. She wore over the soft overshot silk gown the brown camlet cloak which had formed in her mother's

eyes the chief glory of her simple trousseau. It was a long, circular cape, falling to the hem of her dress, drawn up about the throat and shoulders with quaint smocking after a forgotten art, and tied with a long, loose bow of changeable brown ribbon. The outlines of this garment were so simple and so natural that it could never, at any period or by any shift of fashion, become awkward, but it had at that time an effect of Puritan-like quaintness. She wore a dark, broad-brimmed hat with falling plumes, according well in simplicity as in colour with her cloak.

As she passed down to the Burgess pew, her height and bearing, the flowing outline of her costume, the purity and unconscious, childlike seriousness of her face with its clear *brune* pallor, the steady light of her hazel eyes, the lustreless masses of her dark hair, all combined to make a singular impression of mediæval loveliness, of something rare and fine and wholly distinct from the prevalent type of women in the ambitious little city. There were some who, seeing her, smiled and whispered at the quaintness of her dress; there were others who found their eyes irresistibly drawn again and again by the picturesque harmony of her figure; there were one or two persons who, watching the proud, pure severity of her face as she sat with her soul lifted to God and heedless of outward things, saw in her a woman fit for reverence and wonder, one whose spirit had been most evidently nourished on the greatness and simplicity of spiritual realities, and who was yet untouched by "the world's slow stain."

And so it came about that Keith Burgess and his mother, who had been dismayed at the lack of conformity to fashion in Anna's dress at this first appearance in

their world, found themselves met, the service over, by men and women who had admiration and interest, sober and sincere, to express, and much to say aside of the singular distinction, the aristocratic dignity and charm, of the bride. Madam Burgess was not slow to produce the good points of Anna's ancestry of which she had quickly possessed herself, thus enhancing the favourable impression, and she was ready to accept Anna, cloak and all, herself, when the son of one of Fulham's leading men, Pierce Everett, an artist newly returned from Paris, came to her with a respectful but eager wish that Mrs. Keith Burgess would at some future day grant him the notable favour of sitting to him for some saint's face and figure.

There was a little crowd about them as they passed out to their carriage, and much kind and deferential courtesy pressing upon Anna's notice. A group of young girls on the church steps watched her with shy, awed glances, and murmured to each other that they adored her, she was so different from any bride they had ever seen; she was grave and quiet, and something of pathos and mystery seemed to remove her far from the conscious, fluttering pink-and-white brides of their experience.

The young artist, Pierce Everett, joined a friend, a professor of literature in the local university, Nathan Ward, as he walked away from the church.

"What a study for a saint!" he exclaimed, with enthusiasm. "I did not suppose there was such a woman left in the world. Where can she have been saved up to keep that super-earthly look?"

Professor Ward smiled. After a silence he said, —

"Here's a conundrum, if it is Sunday: Why is Keith Burgess like St. Francis of Assisi?"

The answer not being forthcoming, Professor Ward presently volunteered it.

"Because he has espoused Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. In Mrs. Keith these three are one."

Fulham was a small city with a college of no great reputation, which called itself a university by reason of having a divinity school affiliated. Furthermore it was a seaboard town and had had a large shipping trade in former years, now slowly dying a natural death. The aristocratic circle of Fulham — there was but one — was as definitely marked and as strongly defended from invasion as it is possible for such a circle to be, even in an old New England town. In fact, it existed more obviously for its own defence and preservation from the ineligible than for any other reason; and only two classes of citizens were eligible, — namely, those who had some connection with "the university," and those who inherited either poverty or riches from ancestors engaged in foreign commerce. These two agreed in one, and agreed to rule out all others. Thus the aristocratic circle was necessarily small and its social functions painfully mechanical and monotonous; its maidens were proverbially lacking in personal charms, and its young men, with rare exceptions, fled, escaping to more interesting and varied scenes; but it was supremely satisfied, rejoiced in the distinction of its unattainable exclusiveness, and looked with cold and unrelenting disfavour upon all strangers, newcomers, or fellow-citizens, however meritorious, who failed to possess the sole claims to its ranks.

Madam Burgess enjoyed a double title to membership in this exclusive circle. Her fathers before her, for sev-

eral generations, had been shipowners residing in the house now her own, to which her husband, the Reverend Elon Burgess, had come, as an eminently suitable adjunct upon their marriage. Mr. Burgess had filled a minor chair in the divinity school for the ten years of their married life; he had not filled even this particularly well, being a man of small calibre, lacking in any trace of original power or talent, but his name was in the university catalogue, and hence his place in the ranks of Fulham's high social circle safe forever. But, although of limited ability, Professor Burgess was fine of grain and fine of habit, and sincerely pious in a day when to be called pious did not awaken a smile. In the fear and faith of God and in true humility he had lived and died, leaving perhaps no very large and irreparable vacancy, and no overwhelming sense of loss or desolation even to his wife and son, and still having borne —

> "without reproach
> The fine old name of gentleman."

As a girl Sarah Keith had given satisfactory evidence of a "change of heart," and in a time of profound missionary awakening she had declared herself strongly in sympathy with foreign missions. To the position thus taken she had consistently adhered. All boards and auxiliaries to which she was available claimed her name on their lists. Missionary literature was always scattered abundantly in her library, her gifts were large, and her allegiance to religious interests was so completely taken for granted that it would no more have been questioned in Fulham than her place in its aristocracy. Certainly she never doubted herself that she was essentially a religious woman. Nevertheless, religion, whether per-

sonal or in its outreaching toward a world which she would have unhesitatingly called "lost," consisted for her now in a series of mechanical observances, and in tenacious orthodoxy of opinion; it had become a dry husk enclosing a dead seed. The brief blossoming of the religious impulse of her young years over, she had fixed her affections on the small adventitious trappings of "this transitory life," and denied unconsciously the power of that other life, the form of which she so punctiliously maintained.

Her invalidism was becoming, not inconvenient on the whole, and not wholly imaginary. Such was the woman who was now by the ordering of Providence to rule and direct the unfoldings of Anna's early womanhood, since Keith Burgess cherished a respect and submission to his mother which would have found something akin in Chinese ancestor-worship. He had reproduced in his own young life his mother's early missionary fervour; that it was long dead in her case he did not suspect. With Keith this experience had received a strong accent from the temper of his college life, and from the possibility of an actual dedication of himself to the missionary vocation. It had thus become, as we have seen, for a time nobly and completely dominant with him, the strongest passion his life had known. He was himself surprised to find, on his reaction from the crisis of loss and disappointment connected with his illness and the abandonment of a missionary career, how natural and, on the whole, how satisfactory it was to settle back into his own place in his old home, to fall back into the small, comfortable interests of Fulham, and to find full soon an aspect of unreality and even of incongruity clothing his former ardent dream.

Not so Anna.

The ordered precision, the formal, stiff monotony, repeated day after day in her husband's home, the cold, conventional courtesies, the absence of any purpose save to maintain things in existing form without progress or alteration, for a time exerted upon her an almost paralyzing effect. A torpid dulness, a physical oppression, came upon her when shut up alone to the companionship of Madam Burgess, against which she found it impossible to struggle successfully. Accustomed to serious mental work, to much strenuous bodily labour, to the wholesome severity of long walks in all weathers, and more than all to the stimulus of a great, immediate purpose ennobling every homeliest task and smallest service, — the present life of inaction, of sluggish ease, of absence of responsibility of motive or purpose, was like the life of a prison. A heavy, spiritless apathy overbore every motion to fresh endeavour or to new hopes and incitements. She "fluttered and failed for breath," and at times her heart seemed bursting with its longing, the old wild, girlish longing, grown still and deep, for freedom and for power.

With mechanical indifference she accompanied Madam Burgess on her daily drives, paid and received visits, shopped, and attended the various prescribed social functions, read aloud to Keith, and made a feint of embroidering the great ottoman cover which her mother-in-law had contrived for her leisure. It was a stag's head with impossible square eyes, the head partially surrounded by a half-wreath of oak leaves and acorns, staring out of an illimitable field of small red stitches, numberless as the sands of the seashore, and significant, Anna thought wearily, of her endless, monotonous hours.

All the while, just below the surface, repeated through the long days, was the bitter conflict of her spirit, her perpetual, unanswered questioning, Why had God thus dealt with her? Why, with all power to save or heal, had he permitted the illness to come upon Keith which had thus brought to naught what she had supposed was the very and sacred purpose of her creation.

Upon the intensity of youth and a nature of profound and passionate earnestness this thwarting of her dedicated purpose, this apparent rejection of herself from the service of God, worked piteous havoc. Anna did not grow sullen or rebellious, but she felt her whole interior life to be in hopeless confusion. Her sense of an immediate and personal relation to a fatherly God had suffered something like an earthquake shock. All the high faith, the sacred and filial purpose, the profound self-dedication of her girlhood, seemed to have been flung aside by the God whom she had sought to know and serve, with cold, blank indifference, without sign or suggestion of pity, of love, or of amends. The God of whom Mrs. Westervelt had taught her, a conception which she had gradually absorbed and assimilated as her own, a God closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet, to whom the heart was never lifted in vain, whose presence could be indubitably felt and known, who answered every holy and devout prayer of his children, and who led them immediately in every thought and action — where was he? Either he existed only in imagination, or she was herself rejected by him as unworthy; and, in a depth below the depth of burning grief, she saw her father likewise despised and rejected.

A great protest, honest and indignant, rose up in

Anna's heart. She knew that, as far as mortal man could be holy and harmless in the eyes of his God, her father had been; and she knew that her own purposes had been blameless and sincere. She refused to quibble with herself in regard to these facts; something staunch and sturdy in her mental constitution — not obstinacy, not pride, but sheer inward honesty — refused to seek accommodation in any forced paroxysm of humility or blind submission. With a sorrow which a lighter nature could not have comprehended, but with characteristic conclusiveness, she said to herself, the stress of her inward conflict spent, "I do not know God," and composed her spirit in silence to wait.

At the end of a month Keith returned to his class in the Massachusetts Divinity School, with which he was to graduate in June. Immediately thereafter he expected to enter upon the duties of his missionary secretaryship, and make his home in Fulham with his wife and mother.

Thrown thus upon the sole companionship of Madam Burgess, and forced either to make the best of the situation or to appear the crude, undisciplined provincial who sullenly refuses to adapt herself to new conditions, Anna's native good sense came to her rescue. With strong will she crowded down her mental conflict, while with conscientious earnestness she addressed herself to the duty of making herself a cheerful and sympathetic companion to her husband's mother, and of filling the social position in which she was undeniably placed, however inscrutable the reasons therefor. New influences came out to meet and win her on every side, and she responded with a social grace, and even facility, which amazed all who had seen her first as the cold, pale, silent

girl whose marriage altar had seemed rather an altar of sacrifice.

An effect of singular charm was produced by this new mental attitude, the opening out of a nature until now so closely sealed. The native seriousness, the fine, direct simplicity, of Anna's girlhood remained; but they seemed flooded with a new and warmer light, welcome as daily sunshine while the hardness, the rigour, and the severity melted away. She submitted without further protest to the comparative luxury of her surroundings, found it surprisingly agreeable, and discovered a fresh, forgotten joy in simple physical existence, which carried her bravely through the long, dull days of the Burgess order of life.

Notwithstanding all these things, below the surface of her life, often below the surface of her thought, lay an unplumbed depth of spiritual loneliness, a sense of double orphanhood, a voice which cried and would not be stilled; for while men and women had come near, of God she had become shy, feeling toward him as toward a dearest friend grown cold.

But one night, as she lay alone and wakeful, tears painful, not easily flowing, wetting her pillow, a sudden thought stung her by its throbbing wonder and delight, seeming great enough to reconcile all things, even God, who had filled her with bitterness, and hedged her about in all her ways.

She said to herself, "It may be I shall have a child," and the deep places of her nature called to each other in joy and exultation; and she knew that, if this grace should be given her, all would yet be clear, and she could still believe in God's love, and in his purpose in her life.

So, blindly groping through the rough and thorny way by which humanity has sought God through many ages, this human soul, sincere and humble, perpetuated the heart-breaking fallacy of conditioning the Divine Love, the Eternal Power and Godhead, on the small mutations of her own life, seen at short range.

CHAPTER XVII

Affections, Instincts, Principles, and Powers,
Impulse and Reason, Freedom and Control —
So men, unravelling God's harmonious whole,
Rend in a thousand shreds this life of ours.
Vain labour! Deep and broad, where none may see,
Spring the foundations of that shadowy throne
Where man's one nature, queen-like, sits alone,
Centred in a majestic unity.

— MATTHEW ARNOLD.

To some minds there is nothing more pathetic in human experience than the patient resignation with which average men and women accommodate themselves to the most disastrous and distorting of griefs and disappointments, nothing more amazing than their power to endure. If something of the brute nature is in us all, it is not always and altogether the animalhood of greed or of ferocity, but far more commonly the mute, uncomprehending submission of sheep and oxen. Though the futility of revolt is so apparent, the infrequency of it in human lives does not cease to surprise. The modern Rachel mourns for her children, and will not be comforted, but she goes about the streets in conventional mourning, orders her house with decent regularity, and probably, in the end, goes abroad for a time, and returning, enters with apparent cheerfulness into the social round. The modern Guelph or Ghibelline, banished from the political or intellectual activities which made life to him, finds readily that raving against time and fate is no longer good form, reads his daily paper

with unabated interest, and enjoys a good dinner with appetite unimpaired. Very probably the man's and the woman's heart is broken in each instance, but what then? Life goes on, and the resiliency of the mainspring in a well-adjusted piece of human mechanism may be usually guaranteed, with safety, to last a lifetime.

In a year after her marriage Anna Burgess was diligently at work along the conventional lines of activity of her day for religious young women at home, — writing missionary reports, distributing literature, collecting dues. She saw nothing better to do. Her own private and innermost relation to God, it was true, had been dislocated, but the heathen remained to be saved.

One morning, Keith being away from home, Anna came into Madam Burgess's sitting room, her cheeks slightly flushed, her eyes shining, a letter in hand.

"May I read you this?" she asked eagerly; "I have been invited to give an address at the foreign missionary conference next month in H——. What if I could! I should be so glad." Her eyes told the new and eager hope which this summons had stirred within her.

An added degree of frost settled upon her mother-in-law's face.

"You can hardly mean, Anna," she said, "that you would be willing to speak in public?"

"But our missionaries do, and sometimes others," Anna replied anxiously.

"The case of missionaries is, of course, entirely exceptional; and they should never be heard, in my opinion, before mixed audiences. As for other women making spectacles of themselves, it would seem to be enough to remind you, Anna, of the words of the Apostle Paul on

that subject. You would hardly attempt, I think, to explain them away."

Anna was silent.

"A woman who has a noble Christian husband, my dear," continued Madam Burgess, more gently, feeling her case now won, "as you have, who is already at work in this very field of labour, has no occasion to leave the sacred shelter of her own home, and lift up her voice and exhibit her person in public gatherings."

"Keith always said that I might still have a chance to do a little work in this way; I am sure he approved," and Anna's low voice faltered, her heart full just then of the memory of those first days of their common sorrow.

"You have a very indulgent husband, and it is not strange if, in the first fond days of your married life, he may have unwisely yielded to some mistaken sense of duty on your part, and apparently committed himself to a purpose which he would later realize to be impracticable. Understand me clearly, my dear," and the term of endearment sounded, from Madam Burgess's lips, as sharp as the point of an icicle, "my son's wife can never, without flying in the face of all her holiest obligations, both to God and man, present herself before an audience of people as a public speaker. A woman who does this violates the very law of her being, she ceases to be womanly, ceases to be modest, and loses all that feminine delicacy which is woman's chief ornament."

The finality of these remarks clearly perceived, Anna rose from her chair, and left the room in silence. She never returned to the subject, but simply buried in her heart one more high hope of service.

This was the first time that Anna's inexperience and young ardour had joined direct issue with Madam Bur-

gess's social creed. For a while everything had gone so smoothly that Anna's first sense of disparity had been soothed to rest; all things being new, she had failed to see the full significance of certain limitations which hedged her in. Little by little she learned this, and learned the inevitable submission. She never appealed to Keith from his mother, controlled by a sense of the essential ugliness and vulgarity of a domestic situation in which the different elements are working and interworking at variance with each other. Furthermore, she learned very soon that, however sympathetic and gentle Keith might show himself toward her, he would, in the end, range himself on his mother's side of every question.

Stratagem and indirection were alike alien to Anna's nature and habit, but she inevitably learned, in process of time and experience, to avoid leading Madam Burgess to a declaration of definite positions, while she sought to enlist her husband's sympathies in her own undertakings before his mother was made acquainted with them. Any plan which was brought before her by her son was comparatively acceptable to the elder woman. Thus wisely ordering her goings as women learn to do, Anna succeeded in reaching a fair degree of independence and at the same time a harmonious outward order. Her sacrifices and disappointments, the gradual paring down of her larger hopes and the dimming of her finer aspirations, she kept to herself.

Pierce Everett, the young artist who had spoken of Anna's fitness for a model of a saint, had carried out his purpose, and had formally requested her to pose for him. With the cordial approval of both Madam Burgess and Keith, Anna had consented, and late in the winter

the sittings began in Everett's studio, which was in his father's house. Madam Burgess brought Anna to the house for the first sitting. They were received by the mother of the artist, an intimate friend of Madam Burgess, and the older ladies then laughingly gave Anna over into Everett's hands while they enjoyed a discussion of certain benevolent committee matters.

In the studio a little talk ensued regarding the projected sittings, and various considerations involved in them. These matters understood, Anna said composedly: —

"I am ready, Mr. Everett, if you will tell me just what you wish. I do not even know for what I am to be painted."

"And you will not object, Mrs. Burgess," said Everett, quickly, "if I do not tell you now? It is in a character which could not, I am sure, displease you, but I think it would be decidedly better that we should not discuss it, and that you should have no definite thought of it. Is this satisfactory to you?"

"Entirely so."

"Very well."

Immediately upon this Everett took his place at the easel and began a first rapid sketch of Anna's head. He was a slight fellow, below the medium height, with a delicate, almost transparent face, a red Vandyke beard, and large and brilliant brown eyes. Quick and nervous in speech and gesture, he had the clear-cut precision of a man who knows both his means and his end.

Anna thought him very interesting.

At the second sitting their talk chanced to turn upon the relation of the ideals of men and women to their practical lives, and Everett told Anna the old story of

Carcassonne, which was new to her. The train of thought thus suggested soon absorbed her, so that she forgot him and what he was doing. The sacred hope of her own life, yet unfulfilled, still centring in the hope of her father, the ever receding purpose of which she never spoke, cast its powerful influence upon her.

For half an hour neither spoke. Then Everett's friend, Professor Ward, came into the room in familiar fashion, and the two men talked of many things.

When Anna left Nathan Ward said, looking over his friend's shoulder: —

"If you can keep that look, you will make a great picture." Then he added, "But don't fail to get her hands. They have the same expression."

After that it became an habitual thing for Ward to drop into the studio at these sittings. It never occurred to Anna that her presence had anything to do with his coming. She supposed he had always come. He talked very little with her, but she liked to listen to his talk with Everett. It was distinctly novel to her — light, rambling, touch-and-go, and yet full of underlying thought and suggestion. Anna had known few men at best, none of the order to which these two belonged, men conversant with art and literature, music and poetry, and modern life on all its sides. Much that they said puzzled and perplexed her, but she found an eager enjoyment in it.

Then one day Professor Ward said to her, apropos of Shelley, of whom they had been speaking: —

"You do not join in this discussion, Mrs. Burgess. I am quite sure you could give us opinions much wiser than ours."

Anna's colour deepened as she answered: —

"I have not read Shelley in a great many years. Indeed, I know nothing of literature."

There was a little silence; Anna hesitated, half inclined to say a word in explanation of a fact which she plainly saw the two men found very surprising, but finally, finding the explanation too personal and too serious, remained silent.

As she started to walk home from the Everetts', Professor Ward joined her, asking to walk with her. He was a man of forty, with a wife and a flock of little children. Anna knew the family slightly, but pleasantly.

"Mrs. Burgess," the professor began, as they walked down the quiet street, "I do not want to intrude or to be found inquisitive, but I am so puzzled by what you said a little while ago that I really wish you felt inclined to enlighten me. I know you never speak with the exaggeration and inaccuracy which is so much the habit of young ladies, and so I accept what you said as to your ignorance of literature as sober truth. But you are a well-educated woman. How can it be?"

Anna was almost glad of a chance to explain. She was facing many new questions in these days, and she felt the need of light. She answered therefore at once, with frankness: —

"I deliberately gave up study on all these lines when I became a Christian. I supposed them to be contrary to the absolute consecration of my life to God."

Professor Ward looked perplexed.

"You cannot understand," Anna said timidly. "I have felt since I have been in Fulham as if the language of my religious life in those days would be an unknown tongue here. I see that I am right. To you, Professor Ward, I am sure such a sense of duty as I speak of is

unintelligible, but I can still say it was sincere. And it was not an easy sacrifice to make, for I had already grown fond of poetry, and longed to know more in a way I could never express."

"I see," said her companion, gravely; "you felt that the study of the work of men like most of our poets, whose religious positions were vague and not formulated according to our creeds, was likely to act unfavourably upon your spiritual life and experience."

"Yes. To divide my heart, to dim my sense of a one, single aim in life."

"And that aim?"

"To serve God directly in every thought and word. That, and to try to save the souls of the lost."

Professor Ward had no key to the profound sadness with which Anna spoke, but he watched her face with earnest interest. She spoke with the unconsciousness of absolute sincerity. He was reflecting, however, on how much easier life might be if one could sustain, undisturbed, such bare simplicity of conception of human relations.

"And so," he said slowly, "you were going to prune away every instinct, every faculty of your nature which did not serve the immediate purpose of furthering what men call sometimes 'the cause of religion,' and know and feel and be one thing only?"

Anna bent her head in assent.

"That is precisely what men and women do who seek monastic life."

Anna looked up at Professor Ward in quick surprise and instinctive protest.

"Yes," he said, with emphasis, "it was just as noble and just as cowardly, just as weak and just as strong, as

the impulses which make monks and nuns. It is what people do who are afraid of life, who do not dare to encounter the whole of it, who have not reached the highest faith in either God or man."

"Then you think such a resolution, such a scheme of life, produces weak natures, not strong ones?" asked Anna, looking up with her honest, steadfast gaze into his eyes.

"I should say narrow natures, and yet I fear I ought to say weak ones too. Mrs. Burgess, do you not see yourself the weakness, the narrowness, of the position? It is what might be called the department system of human life," and Professor Ward, with rapid gestures, indicated the drawing of sharp lines. "It is as if you said to your ego, your soul — yourself — whatever, — Go to now, this department of your life is religious; it sings hymns, reads a collection of sacred writings at regular hours, prays, gives away money to build churches, and performs various other exercises definitely stamped as godly. This other department loves nature, exults in beauty, pours itself into poetic thought, rejoices in music, expresses itself in art: but all this is secular, pagan — all men may have this in common who have not accepted my particular conception of the divine nature and its dealings with men; consequently all this is to be cut off — effaced, fought with to the death. Am I right?"

Anna nodded, her face very grave, her breath quickened.

"Does that seem to you a reasonable or even a noble conception? There was nobleness, I grant you, in the struggle, just as there was in the fortitude of the Spartans; but who feels now a desire to imitate that sheer, barbaric effacing of human feeling? No, no. That

day has passed. We can begin to see life whole to-day; we can see God in nature, in poetry, in beauty, in ugliness even. He is all and in all. All things are ours and we are God's! I wish I could make this clear to you."

"You have, in part," said Anna, simply.

"No way, however tortuous, by which men have groped after God can be indifferent to us, if we have the right sense of humanity. Trust yourself, Mrs. Burgess; trust the human heart throughout the ages. Believe me, with all the drawbacks, all the falls, and all the blunders, it has been an honest heart and is worthy of reverence and devout study. 'Trust God: see all, nor be afraid.'"

"I have seen only one side of life, one conception of human nature."

"That, at least, was a high and lofty one. For stern heroism of thought, commend me to that old New England Calvinism in which I see you were nurtured. It was fine; I glory in it, just as I glory in heroism everywhere, builded up on however mistaken a foundation. The worst of it, however, is that it completely deceives the human heart as to itself. It is terrible in its power to mislead. The elect are not as elect by half as they suppose. Calvin himself helped to burn Servetus, which was not really fine of him, you know. But I have said enough. I hope I have not wounded you?"

"I do not think so," said Anna, smiling faintly, "but I am amazed beyond everything. All that you say is so new."

They had reached Professor Ward's house, which was very near that of Madam Burgess.

"I wish you would come in a moment," said Ward,

very gently; "you know my wife always likes to see you, and I want to show you some books in which I think you would be interested."

Without reply, Anna passed through the gate which he held open for her, and they entered the house together. Mrs. Ward met them, and they all went into the professor's study.

In a few moments Anna was lost in the realm of books so long self-closed to her experience. She sat at his desk, and Ward handed her and heaped about her rare and beautiful volumes until she became bewildered with the sense of intellectual richness and complexity. She looked up at last, as he bent over her, turning the leaves of a beautiful old Italian edition of Dante's "Commedia," and, with a smile beneath which her lips trembled, she asked, like a child: —

"Tell me truly, is all this for me, righteously, safely?"

"Did I not tell you?" he asked gently. "'All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'"

With that day Anna returned to the long-sealed books of her father's love and her own. She read and studied under Professor Ward's guidance and direction, steadily and with eager delight. She did this with no further misgiving or doubt. He had succeeded in satisfying her conscience, and she moved joyfully along the clear lines of her inherited intellectual choice.

As for her father and the example of renunciation he had given her, her heart was at rest. That which was perfect being come for him, was not that which had been in part done away?

CHAPTER XVIII

Are you the new person drawn toward me ?
To begin with take warning, I am surely far different from what you suppose ;
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal ?

* * * * * * *

Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloyed satisfaction ?

* * * * * * *

Do you see no further than this façade, this smooth and tolerant manner of me ?
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground toward a real heroic man ?
Have you no thought, O dreamer, that it may be all maya, illusion ?

— Walt Whitman.

In her sittings in the studio of Pierce Everett, Anna had found from time to time numbers of an English magazine devoted to social reform. Some of these, at Everett's suggestion, she had taken home with her and read with care. Coming to the studio one May afternoon, for the work had been laid aside for a time for various reasons, and only resumed with the spring, Anna laid down on a table three or four of these magazines with the remark : —

" I wish I knew who John Gregory is."

Everett glanced up quickly.

" I mean the man who wrote those articles on the 'Social Ideals of Jesus,' " added Anna.

" Do you like them ? " asked Everett.

" I do not know how to answer that question," said Anna, musingly ; " perhaps you hardly can say you like what makes you thoroughly uncomfortable. What he says of the immorality of a life of selfish ease appeals to me powerfully."

"It is a great arraignment," said Everett, working on in apparent absorbedness.

"What stirs me so deeply," continued Anna, "is that this writer not only says what I believe to be true, but that he makes you feel a sense of power, authority, finality almost, in the way he says it. And by that, you know, I do not mean that he is authoritative or autocratic; it is simply that he writes as one who sees, who knows, who has gone beyond the mists of doubt and has a clear vision."

"You are quite right, Mrs. Burgess," said Everett, quietly, looking up from his work, his eyes kindling with unwonted light. "John Gregory is a man of his generation — a seer; as you say, one who sees. He is my master. You did not know, perhaps, that I am a socialist?"

"No," Anna said simply; "I do not even rightly know what a socialist is."

"It is, as far as my personal definition is concerned, — there are a dozen others, — a man who believes that the aim of individual and private gain and advantage, to the ignoring of the interests of his fellow-men, is immoral; this, whether it is the struggle for the man's salvation in a future life, or his social or material advancement in this."

Anna looked very sober. In a moment of silence, she was asking herself, "I wonder what becomes of people who are forced into lives of selfish inaction; who have to live luxuriously when they don't want to; who are obliged to go in carriages when they far prefer walking; and who find their hands tied whenever they seek any line of effort not absolutely conventional?"

Looking up then with a sudden smile, she exclaimed,

"I should like to ask this Mr. Gregory a few questions!"

"Perhaps you may be able to some time. He is in this country now, and he is so good as to honour me with his personal friendship. However, he passes like night from land to land; one can never count upon his coming, or plan for his staying an hour. But if I can bring it about, Mrs. Burgess, you shall meet some time."

"Thank you. What is he? A clergyman, a teacher, or what?"

"You found something a little sermonic in his articles?" and Everett smiled. "I believe he can never throw it off entirely. He is an Oxford man, a scholar, and a writer on sociology. He is first and last and always, however, a Christian in the purest and most practical sense."

"That seemed to me unmistakable."

"He used to be a preacher; in fact, he was for a number of years a famous evangelist in England, and also in this country. He was led into that work by a sense of obligation. I should almost think you must have heard of his wonderful success. John Gregory — his name was in everybody's mouth a few years ago."

Anna tried to recall some vague sense of association with the name, which failed to declare itself plainly.

"He was holding great revival meetings somewhere in New England, simply sweeping everything before him; all the great cities were seeking him, you know his income could have been almost anything he would have made it. All this I know, but I never heard a word of it from Gregory himself."

"He is not doing this still?"

"I will tell you. Really to understand, you must try to imagine something of the man's personality. He has in the highest degree that indefinable quality which we usually call magnetism. He has an almost irresistible personal influence with many people. Well, on a certain night, four or five years ago, I should think, during the course of a most successful meeting, it suddenly became clear to him that he was bringing the people in that audience to a religious crisis, and to a committal of themselves to a profession of a knowledge of God, by doubtful means. I cannot tell you the details, I have forgotten them; but I know that he went through something like agony in that meeting, and that in saying the words 'The Spirit is here,' he had an overwhelming sense of presumption and even of blasphemy. He did not *know* that the Spirit was present. He was not sure but the influence at work was the product of music, of oratory, of his own will and personality, of the contagion of an excited crowd — in short, was purely human. If this were so, what could the results be but confusion and dismay when the hour of reaction should come? He was borne down by a sense of pity and remorse even for the coming spiritual doubts and struggles of the people who were at that hour placed almost helplessly in his hands, and abruptly he left the place — hall, whatever it was. That night in his hotel he made no attempt to sleep, but studied the situation, its dangers, its losses, its benefits, with the result that he never again held that order of revival meetings. Whatever good other men might do with the forces at work and put into their hands to wield at such crises, for himself he was convinced that the human had usurped the divine, and made of him, not only an unauthorized experimenter with

souls, but a violator of their sacred rights, albeit hitherto unconsciously to himself."

"What has he been doing since?"

"Studying. He has gone deeply into social and religious problems, has travelled largely, has seen and talked with many of the most famous leaders of modern thought, and I think he has now some large plans which are maturing slowly. Meanwhile he writes such things as you have read."

The following week Anna was again in Everett's studio. This sitting, he promised her as it drew to a close, should be the last, as he could finish the picture without her.

"Am I to see it now?" asked Anna, timidly.

"Not quite yet, if you can be patient still after such long forbearance," was the answer, given with a bright but half-pleading smile. "I want you to like the thing if you can, Mrs. Burgess, and I know my chances are better if you see it when the final touches are on."

"Very well. I am not in a hurry."

When Anna left the studio the sun was low and the room fast growing shadowy. Seeing how hard and intensely Everett was working to use the last light of the day, she insisted that he should not come down the three long flights of stairs with her. The studio was at the top of the house. They parted, therefore, with a brief, cordial good-by, and earnest thanks from the young artist, whose admiration and reverence for his model had grown with every hour spent in her presence.

On the second flight of stairs Anna encountered the housemaid coming up, a tray with a card in her hand. Otherwise the house seemed strangely still and deserted that evening. As she descended slowly from the broad

landing of the main staircase, where a window of stained glass threw a deep radiance from the western sky like a shaft of colour down into the dim hall below, Anna perceived that some one stood there, waiting.

As she looked, amazement and a strange, deep joy took hold on her. The man who stood with arms crossed upon his breast where the shaft of light fell full upon him in the gathering shadow was of heroic height and stature, with a large leonine head, grey hair thrown carelessly from his forehead, strong features, and eyes stern and grave in their fixed look straight before him as he stood.

It was not the first time that Anna Mallison had confronted this face. Twice in her girlhood she had seen it as she saw it now. It was the face of her dream, the dream which for years secretly dominated her inner life as a vision of human power and greatness touched with supernatural light. Even in later time, in this year of her Fulham life, she had at intervals recalled that pres ence and influence distinctly, and never without quickened pulses and mysterious longing. And now she saw bodily before her the very shape and substance of her dream.

With her heart beating violently and her breath painfully quickened, she proceeded down the stairs, through the hall, and so past the place where the stranger stood. When she reached him he became aware of her presence for the first time. Throwing back his head slightly with the action of one surprised, he met Anna's eyes lifted with timid joy and dreamlike appeal to his face, and smiled, bending slightly as if in spiritual bestowment, and shedding into her heart the inexplicable delight which she had known before only as the effluence of a dream.

Neither spoke. The house door opened and closed, and Anna hastened down the street alone under the pale, clear sky, with a sense that the greatest event of her life had befallen her, but she knew not what it was. As she went on her homeward way she seemed to herself to be palpably taken up and borne onward by a power beyond herself, as of some rushing, mighty "wind of destiny."

She found her husband at home, alone in the dusky library by an oppressive fire. She wanted to tell him what had happened; but when she sought to do this she found that nothing had happened; there was nothing to tell unless she should seek to put into words that mysterious dream of her past, and this she found impossible. The dream was her own. No one else could understand.

Keith had returned from a long and tiresome journey in her absence, and Anna was filled with penitence that she had not been in the house to receive him and make him comfortable. He looked worn and dispirited, and complained of the weather, which she had thought celestial, but which prostrated his strength.

In her quiet, skilful way she ministered to him, hiding in her heart the deep happiness in which no one could share, and as she bathed his head he caught her hand and kissed it.

"Oh, my wife," he said, so low that she could hardly hear, "you are too beautiful, too wonderful for a miserable weakling of a man like me; but how I love you, Anna! Tell me that I do not spoil your life."

CHAPTER XIX

I am holy while I stand
Circumcrossed by thy pure hand;
But when that is gone again,
I, as others, am profane.

— Robert Herrick.

John Gregory stood in the studio with his friend, the first greetings over.

"May I look at your work?" he asked, approaching Everett's easel. The younger man stood behind him with sensitive, changing colour, and something almost like trepidation in the expression of his face.

There was a certain quality of command in John Gregory, of which he was himself, perhaps, usually unconscious, which produced in many minds a disproportionate anxiety to win his approval. As he stood now before Everett's easel, however, he was not the awe-inspiring figure of Anna's dream, or even of its sudden fulfilment, but simply an English gentleman in his rough travelling tweeds, a man of fifty or thereabout, noticeable for his height and splendid proportion, for a kind of rugged harmony of feature, and for the peculiarly piercing quality of his glance. His manner was characterized by repose which might have appeared stolidity had not the fire in his eyes denied the suggestion; his voice was deep and full, and he spoke with the roll and rhythm of accent common to educated Englishmen. The aspect of the man produced, altogether, an effect of almost careless freedom from form, the sense

that here was one who had to do with what was actual and imperative, not with the adventitious and artificial; in fine, an essentially masculine and virile individuality, — a man born to lead, not to follow.

Beside him, Pierce Everett, with his delicate mobility of face and the slender grace of his frame, looked boyish and even effeminate, but there was nothing of superiority or patronage in Gregory's bearing toward the young artist, but rather a kind of affectionate comradery peculiarly winning, and he entered into the study of the young man's work with cordial and sympathetic interest.

The canvas before them was not a large one; the composition extremely simple; the single figure it presented was set in against a background of cold, low tones of yellow. A crumbling tomb of hewn stone, with tufts of dry grass growing in the crevices, hoary with age, stained with decay, was set against a steep hillside of sterile limestone. Leaning upon a broken pillar of this tomb stood the figure of a young girl, her hands dropped carelessly upon the rough stone before her, her head lifted and encircled by a faint nimbus, the eyes fixed in absorbed contemplation, and yet with a child's passionless calm. The outlines of the figure, in white Oriental dress, were those of extreme youth, undeveloped and severe; the attitude had an unconscious childlike grace, the expression of the face was that of awe and wonder, with a curious mingling of joy and dread. The subject, easily guessed, was the Virgin in Contemplation in early girlhood.

The picture was nearly finished, only the detail of the foreground remained incomplete.

John Gregory stood for some time in silence. The face and figure before him possessed the expression of

high, spiritual quality common to the early Florentines; there was little of fleshly or earthly beauty, but an aura of celestial purity, of virginal innocence and devout aspiration, was the more perceived.

"You have painted, like Fra Angelico, Everett, with heaven in your heart."

Gregory spoke at last. The artist drew a long breath and turned away, satisfied. They both found chairs then, and settled down for an hour of talk.

"Where could you find a model for such a conception? It would be most difficult, I should think, in our self-conscious, sophisticated, modern life."

"It was my model who created my picture," replied Everett. "Mrs. Keith Burgess is the lady's name. Seeing her at church, when she came here a bride, gave me my first thought of the thing."

Gregory looked at him meditatively.

"It is most remarkable that a woman who was married could have suggested your little Mary there, with that child's unconsciousness in her eyes, that obviously virginal soul. When a woman has loved a man, she has another look."

Everett was surprised at this comment from Gregory, who had never married, and who was peculiarly silent and indifferent commonly when the subject of love or marriage was touched in conversation. He answered presently:

"When Mrs. Burgess was married and came here, she was in a sense a child. She was thoughtful and serious beyond her years in religious concerns, but quite undeveloped on all other lines, and as inexperienced in the motives and energies of the modern world as a child—I think one might have described her then as a very religious child."

"Has she changed greatly?"

"Not so much, and yet somewhat. She has begun to read, you see, which she never had done except on certain scholastic and religious lines; she has begun to think for herself somewhat, and in a sense, one could say, she has begun to live."

John Gregory did not reply, but he said to himself that if she had begun to love she could not have furnished his friend with the inspiration and the model for just that picture.

He had come to Fulham only for the evening, being on his way to take a steamer from Montreal back to England. The two men had dinner together, and then, returning to the studio, conversed long and earnestly. Gregory spoke freely but not fully of plans which absorbed him, but which were not yet matured. Some theory of social coöperation was in full possession of his mind, and he had small consideration for things outside. Everett listened with serious attention to all that he said, and when he rose to make ready for departure he remarked: —

"Mr. Gregory, when the time comes that you are ready to carry into execution any plan embodying this principle of brotherhood, count on me, if you think me worthy. I am ready to follow you — anywhere."

Gregory looked down upon the young man with his grave and winning smile.

"Thank you, Everett; I shall remember. But do you know, my dear fellow, I want to ask a tremendous favour of you now, this very night?"

"Say on," returned the other.

Gregory had crossed the room to the easel, and now stood with a look intent on the picture of the young Virgin.

"It is a bold request, but I want to buy this picture of you now — before you have a chance to touch it again. Who knows but you may spoil it? It interests me unusually, and I want to take it with me to England, — to do that it must go with me to-night. I will pay you any price you have in mind. I want it for a purpose, Everett."

"What! you mean that I should let it go to-night, before I have finished it, or shown it to Mrs. Burgess herself even?" and Everett looked almost aghast. "She has never seen it, even once, you know."

"Yes," said the other, looking fully into the artist's excited face with undisturbed quietness; "that is exactly what I ask of you. I will promise to return the painting to you at some future date if that should be your wish. I shall be over here again in a year."

Everett stood for a moment, reflecting.

"I am very fond of the picture," he said slowly.

"So am I," said the other, smiling.

Everett glanced up, and caught the smile, and felt a strange control in it.

"You will have to take it," he said, with a nervous laugh. "There is no other way."

"Then, put a good price on it, my boy," said Gregory, with matter-of-fact brevity.

"You will agree not to exhibit it anywhere, publicly?"

"Certainly. I could not do that without Mrs. Burgess's consent."

"How I shall make my peace with her, I am sure I cannot imagine," murmured Everett, as he took the painting from its place, and laid it on the table preparatory to packing it.

"Will you tell her, please," said Gregory, quite

unmoved, "that I wanted the picture, and will agree to make good use of it?"

A sudden clearing passed over Everett's clouded face.

"Oh, to be sure, to be sure!" he cried; "Mrs. Burgess has read your recent articles in the *Economist*, and she is quite enthusiastic over them. It will be all right."

"I am sure it will," said John Gregory. He was thinking of Anna's face as she had passed him in the hall below, but he did not mention the fact that they had met to Everett.

CHAPTER XX

That which has caused the miserable failure of all the efforts of natural religion is that its founders have not had the courage to lay hold upon the hearts of men, consenting to no partition. They have not understood the imperious desire for immolation which lies in the depths of every soul, and souls have taken their revenge in not heeding those too lukewarm lovers.

— *Life of St. Francis.* SABATIER.

To be content to have while others have not, to be content to be right while others are bound and crushed with wrong, to be content to be saved apart from the common life, to seek heaven while our brothers are in hell, is deepest perdition and not salvation; it is the mark of Cain in a new form. — G. D. HERRON.

In the few years which followed her early married life, the cords of convention, slender, and strong as threads of silk, were wound closer and closer about Anna Burgess outwardly. As she grew older, Keith's mother grew more immovable in her social creed, and ruled her family more rigidly. Anna might read and study, but if she would please her mother-in-law, it must be in the mildest of manners, and on strictly suitable and ladylike lines; religious biography was recommended, while all literature which conveyed a touch of freedom in thought, or a suggestion of a change in social conditions, was viewed with horror.

Anna might also be charitable, but this too must be on strictly conventional lines. There were numerous benevolent organizations upheld by Fulham's fashionable women; the name of Mrs. Keith Burgess might figure frequently on these, — to this there would be no opposition, but individual and sporadic work among the poor was uniformly discouraged. The family carriage

was often sent into the slums of the city on errands of bestowal as from the wealthy to those "less favoured," but when Anna would have liked the carriage to take her on social calls on equal terms, in respectable but unfashionable regions, she met with a cold disfavour and unyielding lack of compliance.

Malvina Loveland, who had been married to the Rev. Frank Nichols, not long after Anna's marriage, had come again within Anna's horizon. Through Keith's personal influence, exerted at Mr. Nichols's request, a call had been extended to him to the pastorate of a church in Fulham. This church was not very large and not particularly prominent; furthermore, it was not in the "right" part of Fulham geographically, which was as distinctly limited as the social circle.

The Nicholses, delighted to come to Fulham as a university town of some importance, and to a church far more promising of obvious success than the mission enterprise in which they had worked in Burlington, innocently rented a cosey modern house on a pleasant street which, had they but known it, distinctly stamped them as socially ineligible from the day of their arrival.

Mally, dreaming of nothing of the kind, entered upon what she expected to be a somewhat brilliant life socially, into which she saw her husband and herself conducted easily and naturally by the Keith Burgesses.

Anna had received her old friend with most affectionate cordiality, and had spent days of hard work in helping her to order her house, which, as there was a baby and but one servant, was not a small undertaking. Madam Burgess had submitted with patience to the long absences and the preoccupation of her daughter-in-law

thus involved, and had even responded without demur to Anna's timid request that they might have her old friends to dinner.

This dinner closed the Nichols episode from the social point of view. The guests were full of cheerful and unfeigned admiration, eager to please, easy to be pleased, but their good will availed them nothing. Even Anna could not fail now to perceive poor Mally's inherent provincialness, but had she been apparently to the manner born, it would have made no difference with Madam Burgess. The essential qualifications to entrance into her world being lacking, her punctilious and attentive courtesy for the occasion simply covered the inevitable and absolute finality of it.

The Nicholses themselves, while by no means perceiving that the social career to which they had looked forward in Fulham was ended with this visit instead of begun, departed from the Burgess mansion with a vague sense of chill which all Anna's efforts could not counteract. They were never invited there again. Madam Burgess had done her duty by her son's wife's early friends, and the incident, as far as she was concerned, was closed.

Anna, burning with a desire to make up to Mally for the inevitable disappointment which she foresaw, and hotly, although silently, resenting the social narrowness which excluded all men and women whose lives had not been run in the one fixed mould, devoted herself personally to her old friend with double ardour. More than this she could not do. Mally wondered, as the months passed and they settled down to the undivided intercourse of their own obscure church and neighbourhood, that Anna made no attempt to introduce her into her own aristo-

cratic circle. Over and over she bit back the question which would reach her lips, "Why?" Her heart fermented with bitterness and resentment, and her husband was taxed to the utmost to subdue and sweeten the tumult of her wounded feeling.

Another year brought Mally another baby, greatly to her own dissatisfaction. Poor Anna, the great passion of motherhood within her still baffled and unfulfilled, poured out her soul upon mother and child in vicarious ecstasy, and went home to lie awake for many nights with her ceaseless, thwarted yearning for a child; and thus these two women each longed passionately for what the other, possessing, found a burden rather than a joy.

As time went on, Anna, bound to a certain outward course of life alien to her natural bent, lived her own life just below the surface, a life like a flame burning beneath ice. All the master motives of her nature unapplied; all the initial motives with which life had begun, neutralized and made ineffective, she reached, five years of married life over, the point which in any human development is one of danger, — the point when great personal forces are dammed up by barriers of external circumstance, when the prime powers and passions are without adequate expression.

Meanwhile Keith Burgess, his young enthusiasms having lost their first freshness, the limitations of physical weakness and suffering making themselves more and more felt, settled into a narrow routine of life and thought. As his physique gradually seemed to shrivel and his delicacy of form and feature to increase, a resemblance to his mother, scarcely observable in his younger manhood, became at times striking. His missionary activity passed from its original fresh ardour into a

system of petty details, increasingly formal and perfunctory, even to Anna's reluctant perception.

Perhaps it was due to Keith's protracted absences from home, perhaps partly to his physical exhaustion, which made him dull and unresponsive when with her, but Anna felt, against her own will, a growing divergence in thought and interest between them. He was delicately sympathetic, chivalrously attentive, to her in all outward ways; but when she longed with eager craving for his participation in the life of thought and purpose which was stirring the depths of her nature in secret, she found scant response.

Driven inward thus at every point, Anna's essential life centred itself more and more upon the new message of social brotherhood which she had found in the writings of John Gregory; and, unconsciously to herself, the ruling figure in her mind, as the symbol of the human power and freedom for which she longed, was his. The "counterfeit presentment" of this man in her dream had ruled her girlish imagination; and now his actual presence, though but once encountered, exercised an influence over her maturer life no less mysterious and no less profound. To this influence fresh strength was given by the relation, never-so-slight, which existed between them by reason of Gregory's possession of the picture painted by Everett. How she was represented was still all unknown to her, still unasked; but must it not be that, owning this mysterious image of her face, his thoughts would sometimes turn to her? This thought stirred Anna with a thrill, half of joy, half of fear.

An interruption in the routine of their Fulham life occurred after Keith had served the missionary society for a period of five years. An illness which manifested,

as well as increased, his physical inability to continue in his difficult duties brought Keith and Anna to a sudden course of action. Keith resigned his official position, and, as soon as he was able to travel, they sailed for Europe for a year's absence.

This was a year of rapid development and of abounding happiness to Anna. Alone and unguarded in their life together for the first time since their marriage, the husband and wife grew together in new sympathy, and fed their spirits on the beauty and wonder of art and the majesty of nature in fond accord. The fulness and richness and complexity of the working of the human spirit throughout the ages were revealed to Anna; the grandeur and purity of dedicated lives of creeds unlike and even hostile to her own opened her eyes to a new and broader view of human and divine relations. Reverence, love, and sympathy began to usurp the place of dogma, division, and exclusion in her mental energies. She began to perceive that the righteous were not wholly righteous, nor the wicked wholly wicked. The old ground plan of the moral universe with which she had started in life looked now a mean and narrow thing. Larger hopes and a bolder faith awoke in her.

And so in mind, and also in body, Anna grew joyously and freely; even her attitudes and motions expressed a new harmony, while suavity and grace of outline succeeded to the meagre and angular proportions of her youth.

The return to Fulham came, when it could no longer be postponed, as an unwelcome period to their best year of life. Madam Burgess received her children with affectionate, albeit restrained, cordiality, and watched Anna with keen eyes on which no change, however slight, was lost.

When mother and son were left alone on the night of the return, as on the night when Keith brought his wife home a bride, Madam Burgess spoke plainly and directly of Anna. She had never discussed her characteristics from that night until the present, but she felt that another epoch was reached, and a few remarks would be appropriate.

"My son," she said, "do you remember the night when you brought Anna home to this house as a bride?"

"Perfectly, mother."

"So do I. I have been going back continually in thought to-night to that time. Without undue partiality, Keith, I think we are justified in a little self-congratulation. Anna has developed slowly, but she has now reached the first and best bloom of her maturity. You brought her here a shy, angular, country-bred, undeveloped girl, although I will not deny that she had distinction, even then; to-night you bring her again not only a *distingué* but a beautiful woman, — yes, Keith, I really mean it, — a beautiful woman, and with a certain charm about her which makes her capable of being a social leader, if she chooses to exert her power. I understand she has purchased some good gowns in Paris. I have about concluded to give a reception next month in honour of your return, if my health permits."

The reception, which Madam Burgess's health was favoured to permit, proved to be as brilliant an event as social conditions in Fulham rendered possible. The fine old house was radiant with flowers and wax-lights, and the company which was gathered was the most distinguished which the little city could muster. In the midst of all the gay array stood Keith and Anna, — he

with his small, slight figure, his scrupulously gentlemanly air, his thin, worn face and nervous manner; she tall and stately, with her characteristic repose illuminated by new springs of thought, perception, and feeling, full of swift and radiant response to each newcomer's word, overflowing with the first fresh joy of her awakened social instinct.

Professor Ward stood with Pierce Everett aside, and, watching Anna, said in a lowered voice: —

"Mrs. Burgess is a woman now, through and through. Would you know her for the girl whom Keith brought here half a dozen years ago?"

"I could not find my little maiden Mary in that queenly creature!" exclaimed Everett.

"No; you were just in time with that mysterious disappearance of yours, bad luck to you that you made way with it, however you did!"

"It has taken her a good while to accept the world's standards and fit herself to the world's groove, but Madam Burgess has been patient and diligent, and I think she has succeeded at last," said Everett gravely; "she will run along all right after this."

"You think Mrs. Keith will live to sustain the family traditions hereafter, do you? And Keith, what is to become of him? He seems to have dropped off his missionary enthusiasm with singular facility."

"Precisely. You will have to create a nice little chair for him in the university now, to keep him in the correct line of his descent. By and by, you know, he will have the estate to administer. That will be something of an occupation."

"Then he probably will take to collecting things," Ward added, "coins or autographs — "

"Oh, come, Ward, you're too bad," laughed Everett. "You don't know Keith Burgess as well as I do."

Later in the evening Anna was summoned from her guests to speak with some one who had called on an urgent matter which could not be put by until another time.

The fine hall, as she passed along it, was alive with lights, fragrance, music, and airy gayety; her own elastic step, her exquisite dress, her joyous excitement in the first taste of social triumph which the evening was bringing to her, accorded well with the environment. For the first time in her life, Anna had seen that she was beautiful; had felt the potent charm of her own personality; had found that she could draw to herself the homage and admiration of her social world. These perceptions had not excited her unduly, but they had given her a new sense of herself, a strong exhilaration which expressed itself in the lustre of her eyes, the brightness of every tone and tint of her face, in the way she held her head, in the clear, thrilling cadence of her voice.

Once again, after long dimness and confusion, life seemed about to declare itself to her, and the energies of her nature to find a free channel. At last she might move in the line of least resistance, and fill the place she was expected to fill, without further conflict or question.

It looked a pleasant path that night, and submission a sweet and gracious thing.

With a half smile still on her lips, and the spirit of the hour full upon her, Anna came to the house door and opened it upon the outer vestibule, where she had been told the messenger would await her.

The man who stood there was John Gregory.

Anna softly closed the door behind her, and looked up into his face. It wore a different aspect from that which she remembered, for it was stern and unsmiling, and more deeply grave and worn than she had seen it. But even more than before the person of the man seemed to overawe her with a sense of power and command.

"Do you remember me, Mrs. Burgess?" he asked simply.

"Yes."

"And I know you through my friend, through the picture he painted once of you. You must pardon my intruding upon you to-night. I could not do otherwise. I have a message for you, and I am here only for to-night."

Anna did not speak, but her eyes were fixed upon his in earnest question, as if in some mysterious way he held destiny in his hands.

"No man could paint that picture from you now," he proceeded slowly, gently, and yet with a kind of unflinching severity; "you had the vision then. You have lost it now. You saw God once. To-night you see the world. Once your heart ached for the sorrows of others; now it thrills with your own joys. You have given up great purposes, and are accepting small ones. I have been sent to say to you: keep the word of the kingdom and patience of Christ steadfast to the end, and hold that fast which was given that no man take your crown."

These words, spoken with the solemnity of a prophetic admonition, pierced Anna's consciousness.

A faint cry, as if in remonstrance, broke from her lips, but already Gregory had turned, and before she could speak she found herself alone.

With strong control Anna returned, and mingled with

her guests without perceptible change of manner. When, however, the last carriage had rolled down the street, and the house itself was dark and still, she escaped alone to her own room to live over and over again that strange summons and challenge of John Gregory.

Now the sense of what he had said roused her to burning indignation and protest, and again to contrition. She knew that she was blameless and approved if tried by the standards of the people now about her, and they were the irreproachable, church-going people of Fulham. She was simply conforming to the demands of an orderly and balanced social life, and pleasing those most interested in her. But she also knew that, as tried by the standards of her father, and her own early convictions, in the social and intellectual ambitions which now animated her, she was learning to love "the world and the things of the world," to know "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." The voice of her past spoke clearly through the voice of John Gregory and must be heard. The things which she had thought to put away forever in the solemn dedication of her girlhood had gradually returned, and silently established themselves in her life in the guise of duties, necessities, conformities to the wishes of others.

But of late she had come to regard those early scruples almost as superstitious. Where lay the absolute right — the truth? the will of God concerning her? Why was life so hard? Why was it impossible to even know the good? What right had John Gregory to spoil, as he had spoiled, this latest development of life for her, and give her nothing in its place? She resented his interference, and yet felt that she should inevitably yield herself to its influence.

CHAPTER XXI

My thwarted woman-thoughts have inward turned,
And that vain milk like acid in me eats.
Have I not in my thought trained little feet
To venture, and taught little lips to move
Until they shaped the wonder of a word?
I am long practised. O those children, mine!
Mine, doubly mine: and yet I cannot touch them,
I cannot see them, hear them — Does great God
Expect I shall clasp air and kiss the wind
For ever? And the budding cometh on,
The burgeoning, the cruel flowering:
At night the quickening splash of rain, at dawn
That muffled call of birds how like to babes;
And I amid these sights and sounds must starve —
I, with so much to give, perish of thrift!
Omitted by his casual dew!

— Stephen Phillips.

The next morning Anna was sent for to go to Mrs. Nichols, whom she had hardly seen since her return from Europe.

She found her sitting in her nursery with her two little children playing about her feet. She was near her third confinement, and in the shadow of her imminent peril and the heavy repose laid upon body and spirit by her condition there was an indescribable dignity about her which Anna had never felt until now.

Before she left, Mally, with wistful eyes, looked up to her, and said, timidly: —

"Anna, you love little children. No one that I ever saw takes mine in her arms as you do — not even I who am their mother."

"Oh, Mally!" Anna cried, sharp tears piercing their way. "If that is true, it must be because my heart never stops aching for a child of my own. I know now that we shall never have children, and I try to be reconciled; but you can never know, dear, how I envy you."

"Do not envy me," Mally answered, her lips trembling. "You do not know what it means to sit here to-day and see the shining of the sun on the children's hair, and touch their little heads with my hand, and smell those roses you brought, and yet think that to-morrow at this time I may be gone beyond breath, sight, the sun, the children — "

"Dear, don't, don't," Anna pleaded; "you must not think so. You have been helped through safely before; you will be again. People always have these times of dread."

Mally shook her head, but answered quietly: —

"I have never felt before like this, but only God knows. But this is why I sent for you: If my little baby lives, and is a perfect child, and I am taken away, would you, Anna, do you think you could — take my baby for your own, for always?"

"Oh, if I could!" and all Anna's heart went out in the cry, and Mally saw the love which shone in her eyes and wondered at her strange beauty.

"I am sure you will come through safely as you have before," she said, "but this I promise you, Mally," taking her friend's hand and holding it fast, "if you should be taken from your children, and they will let me, — I mean if my husband and his mother should consent, for I am not quite free, you see, — I will take your little baby and it shall be my very own, and I will be its mother while we both live, God helping me."

A look of deep joy and relief in Mally's poor pale face was full response, and the two parted with a sense of a deeper union of spirit than they had ever known before.

Early on the following morning, after a wakeful and anxious night, Anna hastened to the Nicholses' home.

Mally's husband met her with a stricken face, for a swift and sudden blow had fallen; her trial had come and his wife had died, hardly an hour before. There had been no time to send for Anna, although Mally had spoken her name almost at the last.

They stood together in the poor, gay little parlour which Mally had adorned with high hopes of the abundant life into which she fancied herself entering, — the young husband with his grief-wrung, ashy face, Anna with her heart melted in sorrow and compassion. While neither could speak for their tears, the faint wail of a little child smote upon the silence from a room within.

"The baby?" Anna asked under her breath.

A deeper darkness seemed to settle upon Nichols's face.

"Yes, a boy. A fine little fellow, they say; but I feel as if I could not look at him. I have not seen him."

Anna turned and left the room, and in another moment, in the dark inner room where she had sat with Mally in the sunshine the day before, she took Mally's baby into her arms, and bent her head above it with a great sense of motherhood breaking over her spirit like a wave from an infinite sea.

She stood and held the tiny creature for many moments, alone and in silence, while joy and sorrow, life and death, passed by her and revealed themselves. Then she laid

the baby down and went up to the room where Mally lay, white and still, with something of the beauty of her girlhood in her face, and the great added majesty of motherhood and death. On her knees Anna bent over the unanswering hand which yesterday she had seen laid warmly on the fair curls of her little children, and, in the hush and awe of the place, spoke again her solemn promise of yesterday.

After that she came down to the children and their father, and took quietly into her own hands the many cares which the day had brought.

It was late in the evening when Anna, exhausted and unnerved, returned home. She found Keith and his mother waiting for her in the library, — Keith hastening to welcome her with tender sympathy, Madam Burgess a shade colder than usual beneath a surface of suitable phrases of solicitude and condolence. She had been absolutely indifferent to Mrs. Nichols in life, and did not find her deeply interesting even in death. Furthermore, she always resented Anna's spending herself upon that family, and in the present affliction she felt that flowers and a ten-minute call would have answered every demand.

If Anna had been steadier and less under the influence of the piteous desolation of the home she had left, less absorbed in her own ardent purpose, she would have realized that this was not the time or place in which to make that purpose known. If she had waited, if she had talked with her husband alone, the future of all their lives might have taken a different shape. But with the one controlling thought in her mind, forgetting how impossible it was for these two, not highly gifted with imaginative sympathy, to enter into her own deep

emotion, she spoke at once of Mally's request that in the event of her death she should take her baby; of her own conditional promise, and of her deep desire to fulfil it.

There was a little silence, chill and bleak, and then Keith said, in a half-soothing tone as if she had been an excited child, hurrying in with a manifestly impossible petition: —

"It was a very sweet and generous wish on your part, Anna; so like you, dear."

Anna looked at him in silence, her lips parted.

Madam Burgess gave a dry cough, and partook of a troche from a small silver box which she carried in a lace-trimmed bag.

"Yes, as Keith says, my dear, it was a kind impulse on your part, but it certainly was a very singular action on that of your friend. She was probably too ill, poor thing, at the time to realize just what she was asking. I have no doubt you were quite excusable for giving her some sort of a conditional promise, considering all the circumstances. But you need have no sense of responsibility in the matter; infants left like that never live. It will only be a question of a few weeks' care for any one."

Anna turned her eyes from her mother-in-law back to her husband in mute amazement and appeal. They could not mean to deny her this sacred right! It was impossible. And yet a sudden sense of the incongruity of poor Mally's baby in that house smote sharply upon her for the first time.

"If it had been God's will that we should have had children of our own, Anna," said Keith, in answer to her look, "we should have learned to fit ourselves to the many cares and responsibilities involved, I do not

doubt, as others do; but it is very different to go out of our way to assume such cares, not ours in any legitimate sense. I think the question is more serious than you realize in the very natural and proper emotion which you are passing through in the death of your friend. We certainly could not ask mother to take this strange child, and all that would be involved in such a relation, into her house; and we are, I am sure, as little prepared to leave mother and break up our natural order of life," and Keith smiled with kind conviction into Anna's face. She rose slowly and stood with eyes fixed before her, and a strange light was in them, which her husband had never seen before.

"That is all perfectly true, Keith," said Madam Burgess, as if to finish up the case against poor Anna; "and even if all this were not so, there would remain one insuperable obstacle to adopting this infant — an absolutely insuperable obstacle."

"What is it?" asked Anna, very low.

"Blood, my dear. I believe in blood, and never, with his mother's consent or approval, could my son give his name, and all that that means, to a child of alien stock. Never." And Madam Burgess closed her lips firmly and folded her hands peacefully upon her grey silk gown with the consciousness of occupying a perfectly unassailable position.

Anna moved toward the door, a curious effect in her step and bearing as of one physically wounded, her head drooped slightly as if in submission, her eyes downcast.

When she reached the door, however, a swift change passed over her; a sudden energy and power awoke in her, and she turned, and, looking back at mother and son, her eyes flashing light, and a smile they had never

seen before upon her lips, said quietly, but with slow emphasis : —

"You have decided this matter. You have each other; you are satisfied. I shall submit, as you know. Once more you have taken my life — its most sacred promise and its highest purpose — out of my hands. This time another life, too, is involved. One thing only you must let me say, *I wonder how you dare!*"

Facing them for an instant in silence, she turned, and went alone to her room.

CHAPTER XXII

One by one thou dost gather the scattered families out of the earthly light into the heavenly glory, from the distractions and strife and weariness of time to the peace of eternity. We thank thee for the labours and the joys of these mortal years. We thank thee for our deep sense of the mysteries that lie beyond our dust. — RUFUS ELLIS.

By Thy Rod and Thy Staff comfort us.

— CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Two days later, in response to a note from Pierce Everett, Anna went to the studio. He wrote that John Gregory had passed through Fulham and had left the picture, in which she might still feel some lingering interest.

Anna left Keith and his mother diligently occupied in their daily task of arranging and copying Keith's European letters and journals, interspersing them with careful and copious notes from Baedeker. From this laborious undertaking, which absorbed mother and son in mutual and sympathetic devotion, Anna was self-excluded, simply because she found the letters of merely passing interest, but not of marked or lasting value and concern. Madam Burgess confessed that she could think of no occupation more graceful or becoming a young wife than this of putting in permanent form the beautiful and instructive correspondence of her beloved husband, and she found a new cause for disapproval in Anna's indifference to the work. In her own heart Anna hid a great protest against the substitution of puerile and unproductive work like this, for the serious altruistic

endeavour to which she still felt that she and Keith were both inwardly pledged. But this was an old issue, and one, indeed, to-day almost forgotten before her passionate grief concerning Mally, buried yesterday, and the promise to her which might not be fulfilled. The pitiful cry of Mally's baby seemed to sound continually in her ears.

But another, even deeper, consciousness was that of the condemnation, brief, sharp, conclusive, of herself by John Gregory. She believed now that his judgment of her and of the line along which she was developing was in a measure just — but what then? It had suddenly become definitely declared in Anna's thought, with no further shading or disguise, that a life of worldly ease, of self and sense-pleasing, of fashionable charity and conventional religion and of intellectual stagnation, was the only life which could be lived in harmony with the spirit of her home. Her soul lay that day in the calm which often falls upon strong natures when profound passions and powers are gathering in upheaval just below the surface. To conform, or to revolt, or to lead the wretched life of spiritual discord which seeks to avoid alike conformity and freedom, were the hard alternatives before Anna, as she thought, that day.

Pierce Everett, meeting her at the door of his studio, was startled by the pallor and sadness of her face, like that of her earlier years, but forebore to question her. He had expected to see her in the joyous bloom of his last view of her; he had looked for her to fulfil his prophecy.

The light tone of badinage and compliment with which he had involuntarily started to receive her fell from him now as impossible, seeing her face, and in

almost utter silence he led her across the room and pointed to the picture of the Girlhood of Mary.

After a few moments Anna said simply, without turning to Everett, her eyes still on the picture : —

" Did *I* once look like that ? "

" Yes."

" Mr. Gregory said no one could paint this from me now," Anna said slowly, as if to herself, not knowing that tears were falling down her cheeks.

" You are older, that is all," said Everett, gently.

" No, that is not all. I have lost something which I had then."

" We all lose something with our child-soul, Mrs. Burgess," cried Everett, earnestly; " but you have gained more than you have lost. John Gregory was not fair to you to leave you with a word like that. You were a child then ; now you are a woman. That face in my picture is not the face of a Madonna, yet. It did not seek to be, but we do not blame it for that. Should we blame the Mater Dolorosa that she has no longer the face of a child ? "

" Thank you," Anna said humbly, and held out her hand, which the young man caught in his and held with reverence.

She left the studio hastily, not daring to say more, a childless mother of sorrows. The very emptiness of her grief, since no sweet substitution of motherhood could be granted her, made it the more intolerable.

Instinctively she went from the Everetts' straight across the city to the unfashionable new quarter and to the Nicholses' home. She found Mally's baby properly cared for, but coldly, by hired and unloving hands, and took it into her own arms with yearning motherliness and

cried over it, easing her heart and murmuring the tender nonsense, the artless art which mothers always know, but seldom women who have not known motherhood.

Mr. Nichols came in and she told him, — leaving the baby that she might surely control herself, — that on account of Madam Burgess's feeble health it had been found impossible for her to carry out Mally's wish and her own. The disappointment of the poor fellow, with his almost impossible burden and scanty income, was evident; but he rallied well, and showed a simple dignity in the matter which made Anna like him even better than she had before.

"I shall watch over the baby, you may depend, and come as often as I can," she said in leaving.

He thanked her, and she made him promise to send for her without delay or hesitation if there were illness among the children or other emergency, and so came away.

The frail little life, unwarmed and unwelcomed by the love which had been bestowed on the other children, seemed to feel itself in an alien air, and failed from week to week. Anna spent every moment she could with the child, and sought to cherish and shield the tiny, flickering flame of life, but in vain. The baby lingered for a month, and then, on a bleak March evening, Anna was sent for, to speed its spirit back into the unknown from which it had scarcely emerged. She sat all night with the child upon her knees, the young father asleep in the leaden sleep of unutterable weariness on a sofa in the room adjoining. It is not given to a man to know the absolute annihilation of the body by love which makes the endurance of long night watches and the supreme skill in nursing the prerogative of women.

The nurse came and went at decent intervals with offers of help and of food, but Anna quietly declined both. She knew that she was about to partake of the sacrament of death, and she wished to receive it fasting, and, if it might be, alone. She knew that she only on earth loved the little child and longed to keep it, and she meant that it should die in loving arms, if they had been denied it for living.

In the slow hours which were yet too swift, as she bent over the small pinched face, brooding tenderly over the strange perfection of this miniature of humanity, the delicately pencilled eyebrows, the fine moulding of the forehead, the exquisite ear with soft fair hair curling about it, the little, flower-like hands, Anna wondered, as she never had thought to wonder before, at the wastefulness of nature. All this exquisite organism made perfect by months of silent upbuilding, a life of full strength paid for its faint breath, and then, this too cut off before the dawn of consciousness!

Harder to bear was the thought, which would not leave her, that if she could have taken the child for her own its life could have been saved. A photograph of Mally on the bedroom wall in her wedding-gown looked down upon her through the yellow gloom of the night lamp, and the eyes seemed to Anna full of sad upbraiding.

In bitterness of soul she groaned aloud: —

"Oh, Mally, Mally, I wanted to keep your baby, but they would not let me! He is going back to you, dear. Oh, if I knew that you were glad, that you forgive me!"

At the sound of her voice the child on her knees, which had been asleep or in a stupor, opened its eyes, and lifted them to hers. They were large blue eyes like

Mally's, and for a moment their look was fixed upon her own, — a clear, direct look, and, with a thrill of awe, Anna felt a *conscious* look. The instant of that mutual glance with all of mystery, of joy, and of wonder which it held, passed; the waxen whiteness of the lids fell again, but, as it passed, a sense of great peace fell upon Anna's spirit. The last look of that newborn soul, pure and undefiled, had searched her heart, had found her love, had shed the glory of its passing into her bruised and cabined spirit.

"Now go, little child, go to God and be at rest; we have known each other, and you are mine after all," she whispered fondly, her tears falling like spring rains upon white blossoms.

The dawn-light came into the room, dimming the lamp-light with which it could not blend; a tremor passed through the tiny frame, the breath fluttered once or twice upon the lips, and the baby died. Anna had called the father, and he stood by, watching in heavy oppression.

Quietly, with the great submission of spirit which death brings, Anna washed and dressed the little body, putting on the garments of fairylike texture and proportion which she had seen Mally making with warm, dexterous fingers, a few weeks before. Then, having prayed, she left the place and walked home alone through the silent streets, with the consecration of the hour full upon her.

CHAPTER XXIII

He who professeth to believe in one Almighty Creator, and in his Son Jesus Christ, and is yet more intent on the honours, profits, and friendships of the world than he is, in singleness of heart, to stand faithful to the Christian religion, is in the channel of idolatry; while the Gentile, who, notwithstanding some mistaken opinions, is established in the true principle of virtue, and humbly adores an Almighty Power, may be of the number that fear God and work righteousness. — JOHN WOOMAN.

A PHYSICIAN'S carriage stood before the house when Anna reached it, and within there was a stir unusual for that early hour. Jane met her on the landing, and answered her questions.

"Yes, ma'am; Mrs. Burgess, she was all right as far as I could see when I helped her get to bed, but I hadn't got her light out when I heard her give a queer kind of groan, and when I got to her, her face was that twisted all to one side, that it would make your heart ache to see her. But that isn't so bad now; you'd hardly notice it. And she don't seem paralyzed; she moves 'most any way."

"Then she is better?"

"Well, ma'am, I don't know as you could say so much better. The worst of it is, her mind ain't right. She looks sort of blank, and when she talks it ain't natural, but all confused like, and it's hard, poor lady, for her to get anything out; she talks thick and slow, so different from herself."

A moment later Anna saw Keith, and heard the verdict of the physician. Madam Burgess had suffered a paralytic seizure of a somewhat unusual character. He should watch the case with great interest. There was

evidently a small clot on the left side of the brain which affected the mental equilibrium, and produced something like delirium. The ultimate result could only be fatal, and it was doubtful whether full consciousness would return before death.

That afternoon Anna was permitted to go to her mother-in-law's bedside. Keith followed her, full of eager hope that for her there might be the clear and unquestionable recognition which had thus far been denied him. It was a strangely painful thing to Anna to see the familiar figure of a woman so graceful, so precise, so secure in her high-bred self-possession, so decided in her conscious self-direction, prostrate, dull, lethargic; to hear in place of the cold, clear modulations of her voice a meaningless, half-articulate muttering. She stood for a moment beside the bed, her heart sinking with the piteousness of the sight, herself apparently unnoticed by the stricken woman.

At the foot of the bed Keith, standing, cried out as if in uncontrollable pain: —

"Mother, do you see Anna? She wants to speak with you."

Slowly his mother turned her eyes, which had been fixed straight before her, until they rested full upon Anna in a curious, disconcerting stare. This continued in silence for some throbbing seconds, and then, with thick utterance and unaccented monotony of modulation, she said, very slowly: —

"If you had married differently you might have had children of your own."

This laboured sentence, in its violent discordance with the filial tenderness and sympathy which alone filled the hearts of Keith and Anna at the moment, smote them

both as if with a harsh and incredible buffet. Anna turned away from the bed white and appalled, and left the room at the motion of the nurse while Keith, bowing his head upon the bed-rail, groaned aloud. Even in the moment their mother had fallen back into unintelligible confusion of speech. To them both this sinister and unlooked-for expression revealed something of the weary ways in which the clouded mind was straying. Some haunting sense of remorse and accountability, vaguely felt and deviously followed, was torturing the dimness of mental twilight. Again and again during the days following, Anna, sitting just outside the bedroom door, heard the question reiterated in the harsh, toneless voice: —

"Did that baby die?" And always, when answered, there came the same response, "I said it would, I said it would that night."

Filled with pity and compunction as she recalled the severity of her own utterance in that interview, the memory of which with the sick woman had plainly outlived all other, Anna went once more on the third night into the sick-room, knelt by the bed, and took the hand of the sufferer in both her own.

"Mother," she said, in a strong, comforting voice, "mother dear, this is Anna. Will you forgive me for my unkindness that night?"

There was no reply.

"Dear mother," Anna went on, with gentlest kindness, "I wanted to tell you that the little baby has gone to its own mother. It is all right, and I am satisfied."

There was a faint response as of relief and acquiescence.

Then, as Anna still held the limp, unresisting, unresponding hand and looked tenderly in the grey, changed

face, Sarah Burgess spoke once more. Broken and falteringly came the words: —

"I am . . . sorry . . . you have . . . no child," and, as she spoke, large, slow tears rolled down her face.

It was the first time in all their intercourse that she had opened her heart to Anna in motherly pity. Perhaps she could not before, the defences of pride and reserve were sunk too deep. But the few words, the tears, the glimpse of a heart which, whatever its hardness, itself knew the passion of motherhood and could understand her pain, broke down for the younger woman the last remaining barriers which had stood between these two who had lived together so coldly. Anna laid her head on the pillow and kissed the face of the dying woman again and again, their tears mingling, while pity and tenderness overflowed the coldness and all the silent resentments of the past.

Two days later Madam Burgess died, not having spoken again, although she had plainly recognized Keith and watched him with wistful eyes.

The burial and the various incidents connected with the close of a long life, and one of social eminence, over, Keith and Anna turned back to the home, now wholly their own, and looked about them wondering what was in the future. Like all men and women of gentle will, they blotted out, at once and forever, every impression of unworthiness or selfishness which their dead had ever made upon them. They idealized her narrow character, and loved her better than they ever had, perhaps, in life; but underneath all this dutiful loyalty Anna found in her own heart a recognition of great release, and at times, in spite of her will, her pulses would bound and

leap with the sense of new possibilities in life for them both.

Just what these possibilities might be was by no means clear to Anna, nor how far Keith would sympathize with her own vague but dominant desires for a return in some sort to the working motives which had swayed their earlier lives. She was greatly encouraged by the response which she received to her timid approach to the subject of some slight changes in their outward method of life in favour of simpler and more democratic habits. The horses and carriage and liveried servants had long been a source of distress to Anna's conscience, as marks of a privileged and separate class. She had always avoided employing them as far as was possible. She had never, since she had begun reading the social essays of Gregory, driven in the family carriage without longing to apologize to every working man and woman whose glance rested upon her, for a luxury which she felt to be in their eyes divisive, while all the time her heart was crying out for brotherhood and burden-sharing with the lowliest and most oppressed among them.

Somewhat to her surprise she found that Keith was not without a similar consciousness, any expression of which, even to Anna, he had scrupulously avoided in his mother's lifetime. Finding herself met here, and thus emboldened, Anna came to her husband one evening with a question which involved serious doubt and difficulty for her. It was two months since the death of Madam Burgess, and Anna was to start the following morning for Vermont for a visit of several weeks to her mother and Lucia. Keith was too busy with the details of settling his mother's estate to accompany her, but it had been planned that he should meet her in Burlington

on her return, late in May, and together with her make a visit, long-promised and long-postponed, at the Ingrahams', whose friendship for them both had remained unchanged by the years.

And now the postman had brought Anna a note from Mrs. Ingraham which took her back strangely to her girlhood, and to one March night when she had first received a like request from the same source. This note asked her to come, when she came for the promised visit, prepared to give a missionary address at a meeting which would take place at that time in Burlington.

Anna handed the note to her husband, and, as he finished the perusal of it, she said hesitatingly: —

"Keith, I don't know what to do."

"Why, dear? Why not simply do as Mrs. Ingraham asks? You would like to, would you not?"

"Once I would have, only too gladly," and Anna paused a moment, recalling the opposition to which she had yielded so unwillingly in the time past. That outward and forcible opposition was now wholly removed, but another restraint, subtle and subjective, had gradually taken its place, although Anna had until now scarcely recognized the existence of it.

"I am afraid, if I tell you," she resumed, "you will be shocked and pained. Perhaps I cannot even put it into words, and not overstate what is in my mind; but the trouble is, Keith, I am afraid I don't believe everything just as I used to."

Keith Burgess looked at her with his gentle smile.

"Go on," he said quietly.

"Dear, it is very strange," and Anna spoke with sudden impetuousness; "but I suppose I have not

really a right to speak for missions, for I cannot, any more, believe that God will condemn to everlasting torment all the heathen who do not believe in a means of salvation of which they have never heard."

"Neither can I."

"Keith!" Anna felt her breath almost taken away by this sudden admission of what, in the seventies, was rank heresy in strictly orthodox circles. "Why have you never let me suspect such a change in your views? Has this had something to do with your giving up the secretaryship? Was it not then quite all your health? Oh, Keith, if you knew how I have been troubled!"

The tumult of Anna's surprise broke out in this swift volley of questions, for which she could not wait for answers.

"How have you been troubled? Tell me that first, Anna."

Anna's colour came and went. It was not easy to speak, but honesty and frankness were the law of speech with her. Very seriously she said: —

"It seemed so strange to me that you grew, after the first few years, into what often appeared a kind of official and perfunctory way of working — letting the details cover the great purposes. It seemed little, and different from what I had expected. Tables and figures and endless reports — it was all business, and almost like other business."

Keith Burgess nodded gravely. "Go on," he said, as before.

"And then, you see, all at once you dropped it. Of course you had that illness, and I could see how tiresome and troubling the work had come to be; but

I used to think — forgive me, Keith; I hated myself that I did — that you dropped the whole missionary endeavour and purpose and point of view as easily as you might have dropped a coat that you had worn out — "

"In short, that it was all officialism."

"Yes, even that — that it had come to be. And you know how different it was at first, when it was your only life."

"Yes, Anna," and the delicate, sensitive face of the man showed something of the profound pain which he could not speak; "it has been a hard experience. I have kept it to myself because I did not think it was fair to lay upon you the same burden of doubt and conflict. I see how naturally you came to look upon the change in me as you have described. Perhaps your view is in a measure just, too, but I think not altogether."

"Tell me, Keith." Anna was waiting for him to go on with sympathetic eagerness.

"It was simply that, some way, I hardly know how, — perhaps it was in part worldliness and selfishness, but I think not altogether, — my views gradually have changed. Perhaps it was in the air, perhaps I took it in unconsciously from what I read, and from my deeper thought of God and his grace. What I learned of the various forms of heathen religions influenced me somewhat, and also observation of the workings of our own system in our own country even under most favouring conditions. I cannot tell, only I came definitely at last to the point where I could no longer go before the churches and plead with them to send their money to foreign missions to save the heathen from immediate eternal perdition and torment, because they did not believe in the plan of

salvation by a Saviour of whom, as you say, they had never heard."

"What did you do?"

"You see," Keith went on, not noticing her question, "according to our confession there is no salvation even in any ordinary knowledge of Christ, but only for the elect few who experience personal regeneration by conscious acceptance according to the line laid by such men as Calvin and Edwards. Now we know that judged by this test a very large percentage of any so-called Christian community is doomed to eternal punishment, and when you come to the heathen, it grows unthinkable — do you see?"

"Yes, I *feel*."

"I went very soon to Dr. Durham, and poured out a full confession of my 'unsoundness.'"

"What did he say?"

"Anna, that was what settled me. I almost think that if he had said, 'Stop where you are, and wait until you can see it differently,' I might have come back to my early convictions in some sort, at least sufficiently to give me a motive for working on. What he did say, in his large, hearty way, was: 'Oh, my dear fellow, there is nothing more common than such doubts and questions! They naturally arise from time to time with us all. Probably not half the men who are at work in this cause actually believe literally in the common conception that the heathen who do not know of Christ are all condemned. Oh, no, I ceased to hold any such opinion long ago.' 'Then why don't you say so openly?' I asked; to which he replied impressively: 'Don't you see, Burgess, that if we told our change of views to the churches at large we should *cut the very nerve* of the

missionary motive? We may hold these slightly modified views on eschatology ourselves without detriment, perhaps, or danger, although of course they must be held well in hand; but if we should speak them out to the rank and file, the result would be an instant falling off in the receipts of our treasury, and the Lord knows they are small enough and inadequate enough as it is. The average man would reason, if the heathen can be saved after all in some other way, it is not necessary for me to deny myself in order to send them the gospel. So keep still, my dear Burgess, just keep your views to yourself as some of the rest of us do. Go right along as you have been doing, and there will be no harm done.'"

"Keith, dear Dr. Durham did not know it, but that is Jesuitism!" exclaimed Anna, with flashing eyes.

"I thought it was," he replied quietly, "and the result was I gave up my office, partly on account of my health, partly because I could not continue what would actually have been, for me, getting money under false pretences."

"Still, Keith, it is not only to save the heathen from everlasting punishment that we want to send the gospel, but to give them the present salvation from sin."

"Certainly. There are other motives left. I think they may be sufficient to energize our work far beyond what the Gospel of Fear could do, but they are not at present the popular motives to which I am expected to appeal. The future of the cause is not clear to me. If Durham is right, and the nerve of missions will be cut when people cease to believe that the heathen are necessarily damned because they have not accepted Christ, why then I have little hope, because it seems to me impossible for thinking people to hold this view much

longer. But I must admit that it is hard enough to get them to give money when they believe implicitly in the immediate and hopeless doom of every heathen soul departing to judgment."

"Keith, they *don't* believe it! Nobody *believes* it! It is monstrous. If we really believed such things as practically taking place, we should all lose our reason. Our only escape from insanity, I believe, is that, while with our mouths and with our opinions we have declared such things, in our hearts and in our deeper conviction we have denied them, knowing that they would be treason to God. What misleads us all, Keith, I am beginning to believe, is that we have felt bound to accept a system which theologians have worked out, and which has involved a paring down of both God and man to make them fit into the narrow grooves they have assigned them in the hard logic of their formulas."

"Well, let us make this question concrete; illustrate it from life," said Keith, leaning back languidly in his arm-chair. "How is it with yourself? You have been taught, and have believed until very recently, this doctrine of universal condemnation of all heathen 'out of Christ,' and now, it seems, you have begun to question it. What is the effect on the missionary motive in your case? Would you feel as eager as ever to go as a missionary? Does the subject appeal to your conscience as powerfully as before?"

Anna looked at Keith for a moment in thoughtful silence, and then shook her head.

"No."

"You see Dr. Durham was right," said Keith, sadly. "If this is true of you, who have all your life been pledged to this work, — and I admit that it is true of

myself, — what can be expected of the careless crowd, indifferent at best?"

Anna had been walking restlessly up and down the library. Now she came back to the heavy black oak table at which her husband was sitting, sat down, and, resting her elbows on the table, propped her chin in both hands, and so sat silently for many moments. Then she began to speak, but very slowly, rather as if thinking aloud: —

"I have been accustomed, and so have you, all our lives, to the stimulus, the spur, of a piercingly powerful motive, the most powerful possible, I should think. — To save somebody from immediate death when the means of rescue is in your hands is a motive to which every human being must respond, instinctively. Suppose this motive is shown to be, in some degree at least, based upon a misunderstanding, and we find that we are asked to alleviate suffering instead of to save life, why would it not be perfectly natural, almost inevitable, that at first there should be a reaction? Accustomed to the stronger stimulus, just at first our motives and purposes would languish, I think. Mine *do*. I can't help owning it, Keith. But I can imagine that deeper knowledge of God, higher conceptions of human brotherhood, of what they call the solidarity of the race — things like that — which I only dimly realize yet, might reënforce our poor wills, and knit again the nerve if it has been cut. Don't you think so?"

Keith watched his wife as she sat thus speaking, and a great tenderness was in his eyes.

"You are a very wonderful woman, Anna," he said; "your thought always goes beyond mine."

She did not seem to hear what he said, for she went on in the same musing tone: —

"In a way, it seems to me, sometimes, as if every hope, every purpose, every controlling motive with which I started out in life, had slipped away from me, this of missionary work with the rest. All that I thought I could do or become has been rendered impossible in one way or another, and whatever capacity or force there is in me is unapplied. I can't even be a comfortable society woman; other people won't let me, even if I can let myself, and you know how I find it impossible to fit into conventional charities. Everywhere I seem to be superfluous, out of harmony with my environment. I thought once, I was vain enough to think, that God wanted me for some special service, — that he would give me a work for him and for his children; but I am thirty years old now, Keith, and what have I done?"

"You have been a dear wife and a faithful child, — a true Christian woman, — is that not enough?"

Anna smiled wistfully.

"It is not good for any one to simply *be*, and bring nothing to pass. But to-night I feel that whatever new wine life is to bring me will have to be put into new bottles. The old motives and forces have spent themselves, and the old hopes; and the forms which held them, have gone with them, for me."

BOOK III

NIGHT

O Holiest Truth ! how have I lied to thee ?
I vow'd this day thy sacrifice to be ;
But I am dim ere night.
Surely I made my prayer, and I did deem
That I could keep in me thy morning beam,
Immaculate and bright.
But my foot slipp'd ; and, as I lay, he came,
My gloomy foe, and robb'd me of heaven's flame.
Help thou my darkness, Lord, till I am light.

—John Henry Newman.

CHAPTER XXIV

Christianity has hitherto only partially, feebly, and waveringly taught its great doctrine. Christendom has not believed its own gospel. Forsaking the vital religion of Jesus, and of all the heroes and saints as impracticable, men have put up with a sort of conventional Christianity, from which the great essential ideas of the Golden Rule and the real presence of God were dropped out.

— C. F. Dole.

"I have spoken for three nights in this place, and for three nights you have heard me patiently. I have not regarded the favour of any man, but neither have I wished to bruise or wound. And yet, as I stand here now for the last time, I must declare the whole truth as it has been given to me. I have charged upon our present social and industrial conditions grave responsibility. To-night I declare plainly that you who calmly accept and profit by them, whether you know it or whether you know it not, are rejecting Jesus of Nazareth and his kingdom."

The speaker was John Gregory, the place a large hall in the city of Burlington, crowded to its utmost with eager listeners, for the theories which he proclaimed were new and startling in that day.

As in his earlier revival preaching, so now, Gregory's utterance was attended with peculiar power. There was this difference, however, between his relation to his audience now and in that other time: then a familiar appeal was reënforced, even though involuntarily and unconsciously, by the full weight of his personal and psychic influence; now he relied wholly, it appeared,

upon the dynamic of his message. His manner was more impassioned than in that earlier time, but less exciting.

Keith and Anna Burgess, from their places in the audience with Mrs. Ingraham, whose guests they were, watched and listened with almost breathless intensity of interest. They had not heard it on this wise before.

"Do you remember," continued Gregory, with searching emphasis, "that on a certain day the Master said, 'Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven'? Do you remember how the twelve men who followed him were said to have been 'exceedingly amazed'? From the fourth century, when the Church and the world formed their unhallowed union, down to the present day, men have continued to be 'exceedingly amazed' at a saying so inconvenient and so revolutionary, and have set themselves to blunt its sharp edge or to explain it away altogether.

"To-night I am here to say to you plainly, This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, and woe unto him who seeks to take it away from the words of Christ. Put with it, if you will, other like words from the lips of Christ and his Apostles, rather than seek to abate the force of these. But why are the rich condemned? Surely they are the most law-abiding, most influential class in every community! Because the riches of the rich man are founded upon a lie! This is the lie: *that a man has the right to build up his own prosperity and enjoyment upon the suffering and privation of his fellow-men.*

"Ask yourselves, men who listen to me now, do I tell the truth?

"You made your money in trade; very well — is trade just? Could you, under present conditions, have made

money, had you dealt justly and loved mercy? had you lived the truth, shown the truth? Could your trade have prospered if you had followed the simplest rule of Christ, 'Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you'?

"Is not the very basis of your trade and of your gains that you force other men into failure, dejection, and poverty, and rise upon the wreck of them? Well has it been said, 'A rich man's happiness is built up of a thousand poor men's sorrows.'

"Many men make their money in manufacture, perhaps not largely so in this city; but the conditions are familiar to us all. Very well, is manufacture true to God, true to men?

"The profits, we will say of a given manufacture, were not great enough last year; the owners had a large income, but not as large as they wanted; some of the rich stockholders grumbled. What did they do? They reduced the beggarly wages of the toilers in their iron prisons, sent them home to their wives and children with less than sufficed to give them daily bread and shelter, and they knew it. They sent pure girls to the life of shame, and honest men to the black refuge of despair. Thus they declared their dividend, and their rich neighbours praised their business genius and pocketed their share of the gains complacently; and the rich grew richer, and the poor, poorer. This done, they come before God with pious words; they pass boxes in the churches to gather the widows' and the orphans' mites whose burdens they do not lift, no, not with one finger; they build a hospital now and then; they found a university, and their names are exalted; they sit in their homes with all their treasures of art, of intellect, and of

refinement about them, and thank the Lord that they are not as other men are, or even as that poor fellow they hear reeling, profane and drunken, down the street, because *no* home is his, no hope, no God.

"Hear the words which God hath sworn by his holy prophets:

"'Forasmuch, therefore, *as your treading is upon the poor*, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

"'For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins; they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

"'Woe to the City of Blood!

"'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

"'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion! . . . that lie upon beds of ivory and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, that chant to the sound of the viol and invent to themselves instruments of music, . . . that drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph!

"'Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!

"'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.

"'For, behold, the Lord said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, A plumb-line. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of

my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.

"'For judgment will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plumb-line: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.

"'For ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

"'But your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with hell shall not stand.'"

As the speaker went on marshalling and massing with stern conviction the tremendous indictments and declarations of the Hebrew prophets, which the people before him had never heard thus definitely applied to their own social conditions, the dramatic effect became irresistible. A mighty blast of wind seemed to bow their heads, and many trembled and grew pale.

Suddenly John Gregory, whose whole face and figure had been rigid and set with the awe of what he spoke, stepped out to the very edge of the platform, and, with a gesture of gentleness and reconcilement, and a smile which relaxed the tense mood of his hearers, cried: —

"But this is not all! Never did the prophets leave the people without a ray of hope — never did they withhold

"'Belief in plan of God enclosed in time and space,
Health, peace, salvation.'

"'Is it a dream?
Nay, but the lack of it a dream,
And failing it life's love and wealth a dream,
And all the world a dream.'"

These words were spoken with no less conviction than those which had gone before, but the change of voice, of expression, of attitude and gesture, were those which only a master of oratory could have so swiftly effected. The audience, now wholly under his control, felt a new thrill of comfort, of hope, even of exultation.

"The Spirit of God is brooding in the bosom of all this chaos, and a new day dawns. Fear not, but look within. Your own heart confesses the bond of brotherhood which unites you to all the race. Let your heart speak.

"Men everywhere see the new light, and confess and deny not that it is the true light, the light which lighteth every man coming into the world, until sin and selfishness quench it.

"The day is come when men shall no longer greedily seek their own salvation; the straitened individualism of the fathers has had its day; even the passion for personal perfection is refined selfishness from the new point of view. Many Christian souls have been misled in the past by the mistaken idea of self-sacrifice and renunciation, not for their results to humanity, but for the perfecting of self, a fruitless, joyless, Christless thing. The continual seeking for the safety here and hereafter of the individual — the man's own advantage, what if spiritual? — held up always as his chief and noblest aim, have resulted in Christianity becoming a symbol for sublimated selfishness.

"A greater, nobler motive is ours to-day — no new gospel, but a right reading of the old, a deeper insight into his purpose who said, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me.'

"Here may we, at last, and perhaps for the first time

in long years of blind and baffled longing for the fellowship of Christ our Sacrifice, learn the awful joy of dying in our own lives that so we may not live alone.

"Your soul cannot rise toward God, my brother, while you are treading down other souls beneath your feet. Cease the hopeless effort. Take the world's burden on your heart, and you shall know Christ. Refuse the joys which can only be for the few and the rich. Take nothing but what you can share. Learn poverty and simplicity and hardihood; unlearn luxury, exclusiveness, epicureanism. Be pioneers in the new state, apostles of the new-old gospel — the Gospel of Brotherhood, of Fellowship, of Sacrifice."

As Anna Mallison, in her early girlhood, had responded with swift, unquestioning response to the simple appeal of the missionary, and had offered herself unreservedly to the work of seeking lost souls in the heathen world, so now, in the maturity of her womanhood, her inmost soul confessed that her hour had come. The message of John Gregory, heard vaguely and partially before, had now reached her fully, and she found its claim upon her irresistible.

"Where this leads, I follow," a voice said in her heart; "I follow though I die! It is for this I have waited."

Turning, she looked into her husband's face, and their eyes met. Keith Burgess read what he intuitively expected in the deep awe of Anna's eyes; while she read in his a sympathy and response, real, and yet strangely sad.

Gregory had been about to leave the platform, his address ended; but the audience sat unmoving, as if they would hear more. A man rose up then, in the middle of the hall, and spoke.

"Mr. Gregory," he said, "some of the people are

saying that, having told us so much, you ought to tell us more. If it is true that you have some scheme or system by which people like us could live such a life as you describe, we want to hear about it."

Having so said, he sat down.

John Gregory turned about and came slowly back to his former place. Here he stood, confronting the people with a gravely musing smile. Again, as she saw him, there swept over Anna's memory the sense that this was the presence of her girlish dream, and the old indefinable sense of joy in the power of this man was shed into her heart.

"You want to hear me say something about Fraternia, I suppose," said Gregory, slowly.

"I am not here for that purpose. I covet no man's silver or gold for my project, let that be distinctly understood first of all. Fraternia has not had to beg for support, thus far. Men and women who are like-minded with ourselves are welcome to join themselves to us. No others need apply," and he smiled a peculiar, humorous smile of singular charm.

"Fraternia," he continued, "is an experiment. It is only a year old. Is is what may be called a coöperative colony, I should think; that is, a little community of people who believe that no one ought to be idle and no one ought to overwork, and accordingly all work a reasonable number of hours a day. We also believe that an aristocratic, privileged class is not a good thing, not even a necessary evil, but a mere gross product of human selfishness. We have none, accordingly, in Fraternia, nor anything corresponding to it. We are all on a precisely equal footing. That bitterest and tightest of all class distinctions, the aristocracy of money,

is unknown among us. Those who have joined us have thus far put their property into the common treasury, and all fare alike. We propose to work out this social problem on actual and practical lines. We all work and all share alike in the results of our work.

"You will ask what we do. Fraternia lies in a valley among the foothills of southwestern North Carolina. We raise all kinds of fruit, some grain, and some cotton. We have water-power, a mountain stream as beautiful as it is useful, and so we have built a cotton mill. We have made it as pretty as we could, this mill, — better than any man's house, since the house is for the individual, and the mill for the use of all. By the same token our church and our library are to be finer than our houses when we advance so far as to build them. We have nothing costly or luxurious in Fraternia, but our mill is really very attractive. We all like to work in it. You know it is natural to like to work under human and decent conditions. I believe no man ever liked absolute idleness. It is overwork and work under hideous and unwholesome conditions against which men revolt.

"In our personal and home life, simplicity and hardihood are the key-notes. No servants are employed, for all serve. Our luxuries are the mountain laurel and pine, the exquisite sky and air, the voices of the forest, the crystal clearness of the brook. In these we all share. So do we in the books and the few good pictures which we are so happy as to own; in the best music we can muster and in the service of divine worship. Life is natural, homely, simple, joyous. Its motive: By love, serve one another. From no one is the privilege of service withheld. Thank God, we have no forlorn leisure class.

"Our mission, however, is not to ourselves alone, but to the world outside. We are holding up, by our daily living, a constant object-lesson. We are preaching co-operation and social brotherhood louder than any voice can ever preach it, and the small child and the simple girl can preach as well as the cultured woman and the strong man.

"Who are we? We are mostly from England, many from the slums of London, others from its higher circles, some Germans and Scandinavians, and thus far not more than a dozen American families. Some of us had nothing to begin with, and some had large property; some were so unfortunate as to belong to the number of those who oppress the poor in mills and mines, while others were simple peasants. We have no difficulty in living happily together on the broad basis of a common human nature, a common purpose, and a common hope.

"But there is another side to this adventure, friends," and Gregory spoke with deeper seriousness. "Fraternia is nothing unless it is builded on the immutable laws of God and of righteousness. Never, never can we succeed if sin grows little to us and self large. Our message will be taken from us, our arm will be paralyzed, if the day shall ever come when the lust of gold, the lust of power, the lust of pride, shall taint the free air of our high valley.

"So then, if any among you would join our ranks, see that you shrive your souls and come to us seeking only the Kingdom of God and his righteousness."

CHAPTER XXV

Sin and hedgehogs are born without spikes, but how they wound and prick after their birth we all know. The most unhappy being is he who feels remorse before the deed, and brings forth a sin already furnished with teeth in its birth, the bite of which is soon prolonged into an incurable wound of conscience.

— Richter.

On the steps of the rostrum, as he descended them, John Gregory was met by a man of singular aspect, a man who has been encountered by us before, in the house of Senator Ingraham, — his son, Oliver.

As the two clergymen whom he had then addressed had been disturbed, and even dismayed, by this strange face and figure, the smooth, egglike face with its enormous forehead, narrow eyes, and wide, thin-lipped mouth, so now Gregory drew back instinctively, finding the singular apparition thus suddenly before him.

Mr. Oliver Ingraham did not appear to notice the movement, but, smiling his peculiarly complacent smile, held out one long, sinuous hand, and as Gregory took it, not over eagerly, he remarked in his high, feminine voice : —

"I liked your line very much, Mr. Gregory. Nothing would suit me better than to see these rich men brought to book. They'll get their come-uppance in the next world, anyway ; but I sometimes get tired of waiting. It would be a satisfaction to see Dives, Esquire, taking his torments here once in a while, don't you think so?" and the malevolent leer with which the question was accompanied gave Gregory a chill of disgust.

Oliver held in his left hand a handsomely bound note-book and silver pencil-case which it was his custom to carry everywhere. Gregory, now about to pass on, and greet the crowds who were waiting to speak with him just below, was again stopped.

"Just a moment, Mr. Gregory," said the other, slipping off the elastic, and opening the note-book with the dexterity of constant habit; "I want you to help me a little in gathering some very valuable statistics. It's rather in your line, I take it. I have been engaged in this work for several years, and find it extremely interesting."

Gregory noted the long, white, flexible fingers of the man, and the look, half of deficient intellect and half of cunning, in his face.

"Please make haste, Mr. Ingraham," he said shortly, "there are others waiting."

"I am making a computation," Oliver continued imperturbably, "in fact, a carefully tabulated record, according to nations, of the probable number of souls from each nation now in Sheol — it is considered polite now to call it Sheol, I believe. We used to say hell when we were boys, didn't we, Mr. Gregory?" and Oliver laughed his low, cruel laugh.

"Excuse me," exclaimed Gregory, impatiently; "I could not give you any information on that subject. I have never been there. Allow me to pass on, if you please."

Oliver closed his book as if not unaccustomed to rebuffs; but, as Gregory's forward movement obliged him to retreat down the steps, he remarked slyly: —

"I had a message to you from the senator, if you only weren't in such a hurry. He is one of the fellows that

will have to go to now, weep and howl. He has the shekels, I can tell you! What he wants of you is more than I can figure out. I should suppose Ahab would as soon have sent for Elijah."

"Did your father send for me?" asked Gregory, surprised. They were now at the foot of the steps, and the crowd was gathering about them.

"Yes; he would like to see you in his office on this same block, next building, as soon as you can get away from here. You work him right, and you can get something out of him for your Utopia." The last words were called back aloud with a series of confidential nods, as Oliver turned and plunged into the crowd, who seemed to make a way for him with especial facility. Gregory saw him go with a keen sense of heat and discomfort.

Half an hour later, Gregory found himself in the office of Senator Ingraham, seated in a substantial office-chair by the well-appointed desk, while Mr. Ingraham, himself in evident and most unusual mental disturbance, walked up and down the room. Suddenly he wheeled, and confronted Gregory, as if with sudden, though difficult, resolution.

"Mr. Gregory," he said, low, and with the stern, terse brevity of a man who finds himself forced to speak what he would rather leave unsaid, "for over thirty years I have carried certain facts in my personal history shut up in my own memory. Not one other being, to the best of my belief, has shared my knowledge. To-night, I cannot tell how, I do not know why, I feel that I must break silence, and before you — stranger as you are — unload my burden. A strange compulsion seems upon me to disclose the things I have hitherto lived to conceal. What there is in you or in what I

have heard you say, to bring me to this point, I cannot understand; but I feel in you something which makes you alone, of all men I have ever met, the one to whom I can speak — and must. Are you willing to hear me?"

John Gregory noted the set, hard lines in the lawyer's face, the knotted cords in his hands, and the tone, half of defiance, half of self-abasement, with which he threw out this abrupt question. Accustomed to encounters with men in their innermost spiritual struggles, Gregory was in no way astonished or excited by this surprising beginning of their interview, and simply nodded gravely in token that Ingraham should proceed.

"I will not affront you by demanding secrecy on your part," the latter began haughtily; "if it were possible for you to betray my confidence, it would have been impossible for me to give it to you. I understand men."

He paused. Gregory made no remark in confirmation of this assertion, but the direct, unflinching look with which he met the appeal in the eyes of the speaker was full guarantee of good faith. There was promise of profound and sympathetic attention in Gregory's look, there was also judicial calmness and reserve; in fine, the characteristics of the priest and the judge were singularly united in him, and it was to the perception of this fact that he owed the present interview.

"I do not know whether I am a respectable citizen or a murderer," Ingraham now began, turning again to walk the floor, while an uncontrollable groan as of physical anguish accompanied this unexpected declaration. "Imagine, if you will, what thirty years have been inwardly with this uncertainty as food for thought, served

to me by conscience, or some fiend, morning and night. If I could have forgotten for one blessed day, it has been ingeniously rendered impossible, for sin in bodily form is ever before me. You have seen my son."

With this sentence, harsh and curt, Ingraham paused, glanced aside at Gregory, who assented, and then continued to walk and speak. His voice and manner alike showed that he was holding himself in control by the effort of all his will. Strange distorting lines appeared in his face, and there was heavy sweat on his forehead.

"I was twenty-five years old when I was married, and was alone in the world save for one brother, — Jim, we always called him, — two years younger than I. We had inherited a good name, strong physique, and some little property from our parents, and started in life shoulder to shoulder. In Burlington, where we first began business life together, we became intimately acquainted with a family in which there were two daughters. The elder, Cornelia, was very pretty and singularly attractive. Men always fell in love with her. I did, desperately. The younger sister was a commonplace, uninteresting girl, rather sentimental perhaps, not otherwise remarkable.

"I shall make this story as short as possible. I offered myself to Cornelia after long wooing, and was refused. I was bitterly wounded, angry, defiant. While I was in that state of mind, it became apparent to me that I was secretly an object of peculiar interest to the younger sister. Like many another fool, half in spite and half in heart-sickness, I sought her hand, and was at once accepted, and our marriage followed quickly. Within the year Cornelia and Jim became engaged. There was a hard, silent grudge against Jim in my heart from the day I first suspected that it was he who had stood between Cornelia

and me, and their engagement increased the grudge to hate.

"We had, before this, put the whole of our inheritance into mining fields in what was then the far West, buying up a large tract of land, divided equally between us. The year after my marriage we moved West for a time, and I started out on a prospecting tour of our land; Jim to follow me when he had finished establishing a kind of business office in pioneer quarters, in a small town as near the base of our operations as was feasible. My wife remained in this town.

"On horseback, with two engineers and a copper expert and an Indian guide, I rode through our possessions. Miners were already at work, and had pursued the lead far enough to prove pretty distinctly that, while Jim's part of the tract was likely to be fairly productive, the vein stopped short of mine, which was thus practically worthless.

"I rode back to our camp in a black mood. Jim, it seemed, was to succeed in everything; all that he sought was his, and for me there was nothing but failure and defeat. All the way back I brooded bitterly on the contrast between us, until I was in a still frenzy of jealousy when I reached the camp. The contrast between Cornelia, for whom I still had a wild, hopeless passion, and my wife, sickly, dull, indeed disagreeable to me already, was maddening, and had been sufficiently so before. But now, when I thought of Jim, with Cornelia for his wife and the certain prospect of large wealth to add to his elation, while I was without a penny or a prospect of any sort, the rage and fury in my mind became almost intoxicating.

"We had encountered hostile Indians on the trail as

we returned, but our bold, dare-devil dash through this danger made slight impression on me. I think death would have been welcome to me that night. God knows I wish I had met it then. My heart was evil enough, but at least it had not the guilt that came later.

"I suppose, Mr. Gregory, that I am answerable for my brother's death — not in the eye of the law, but before God. And yet — if you could tell me that I am mistaken, that I exaggerate, that other men would have done the same and held themselves guiltless — if that could be — " Ingraham broke off and fixed his eyes on Gregory's face once more, as if in appeal for his life.

"Please go on," was Gregory's response, but the words were gently spoken, as the words of a physician when he is diagnosing a manifestly mortal disease.

"Very well," said Ingraham, harshly. "Jim was at the camp, and was boy enough to parade a letter from Cornelia before me. We quarrelled fiercely, about what I cannot remember, but I could not restrain the storm of rage and jealousy in me. It had to break loose somewhere. I refused to tell Jim what I had discovered regarding the lead, and he declared he would go and find out for himself. I said he would be a fool if he did, but gave him no hint of the fact that there were hostile Indians on the way. He knew nothing of the conditions, nor the character of the people about us, having never been in the country before. It was early in the morning. We had ridden all night, and the men had gone to their tents and were sleeping off the effects of our struggle. I told Jim he could not get a guide. He merely whistled in a light-hearted, careless way he had, and started off to a neighbouring camp, in search, as I inferred, of some escort. I saw him no more, and made

no attempt to govern his actions, and did not even know whether he had started. Who and what the guide was whom he obtained, I learned later.

"I slept most of that day, after Jim disappeared, exhausted in body and mind, and continued to sleep far into the night, keeping my tent door securely closed, as I wished to see and speak to no one. It was, perhaps, three o'clock of the morning following when I was roused by a strange noise at my tent door. Starting up from my bed on the ground, I saw that some one had cut open the fastenings, and that the flap was drawn back. In the opening thus formed stood the shape of an Indian rider on horseback, perfectly motionless. The moonlight, which was unusually brilliant, fell full upon the face of this man, and I recognized him at once, with a horrible chill of foreboding, as a half-witted Indian who sometimes acted as guide, but only to those who knew no better than to accept his services, which were worthless and treacherous. He was a half-breed, an odious, repulsive being, with only wit enough to be malicious, and of abnormal treachery and cruelty even for his kind. Never can I forget that face of his in the moonlight. He spoke not one word, but simply sat his horse and looked at me with his narrow, gleaming eyes, a malignant grin making his ugliness fairly fiendish. If you want to get a faint idea of his look, recall the face of Oliver — my son;" Ingraham's voice sunk to a whisper, and he added, "I can never escape it."

Gregory's brows knit heavily, and his face reflected something of the tortured misery of the man before him.

"It was not," said Ingraham, "until I had staggered to my feet that I saw that across his saddle-bow this

creature carried a dead body — Jim. There was an Indian arrow in his side."

"No matter, no matter for the rest; I understand," said Gregory, hastily.

There was silence for a moment, and then Ingraham, with a strong effort, rallied himself to conclude his story.

"I was Jim's heir." These words were spoken with hard and scornful emphasis. "That was a feature of the case which presents complications to a man in forming a judgment. Perhaps you will believe me when I say that this issue had not entered my mind in letting the boy go to his death. Indeed, the whole series of events was without deliberation, but under the influence of blind, sullen anger."

"I believe you," said Gregory.

"All the same, I profited by his death. The mines proved immensely valuable, and are even to-day. They have made me rich — and incomparably wretched. A word or two more, and you will know the whole story. Jim was brought home, here, for burial, my wife and I returning with his body. All through that journey, and continually, for many months, I saw before me, waking or sleeping, that face of cruelty incarnate, the half-witted Indian guide, as I had seen him on that awful night. That face was my Nemesis. It is still.

"Within the year my wife gave birth to a son, Oliver, — a strange perversion, made up of moral obliquity, mental distortion, and physical deformity, like an embodiment of sin. On his face was stamped by some strange trick of nature the image which had haunted me — as if the Fates, or the Fiends, or God himself, had feared I might forget, and know a day of respite.

"My wife died when Oliver was a few months old, —

died of cold, I believe, the chill of our loveless marriage. Two years later Cornelia and I were married. I believe she has been happy. I have been prospered, and have risen to a position of some influence, and we have all that could be desired in our home, in our three daughters. But when, to-night, I heard you pronounce the judgments of God on men who had built up prosperity upon a lie, I was like a man struck in his very heart. I felt that I could no longer endure my hidden load, and must confess to one human being my past, and make restitution, if by any means it is yet possible. The Romish Church is merciful, when it provides the possibility of confession to sinful men.

"What have you to say to me? Have you healing for such a sore as mine?"

With these abrupt words Ingraham threw himself into a leather-covered arm-chair with the action of complete exhaustion. His aspect was changed from that of the alert, confident man of the world and of affairs, to that of a broken down and shattered age.

CHAPTER XXVI

Sin is not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of.
— Matthew Arnold.

Use sin as it will use you ; spare it not, for it will not spare you ; it is your murderer and the murderer of the world : use it, therefore, as a murderer should be used. Kill it before it kills you ; and though it kill your bodies, it shall not be able to kill your souls : and though it bring you to the grave, as it did your Head, it shall not be able to keep you there. — Baxter.

John Gregory met the demand thus made upon him with all the moral and spiritual resources of which he was master, for all were needed. The full strength of the man's personality was brought into action, the lofty severity, the unflinching hate of sin, and yet the clear vision which could see beyond the torture and taint of it, and sound the depth of a nature which thus agonized for redemption and for righteousness.

"The only sin," he said, in the words of another, "which is unforgiven is the sin which is unrepented of. That early yielding to a paroxysm of jealousy and rage had a fearful, and yet it may even be a merciful, result. There are those who have given way to worse, and, no result following, have lived on in hardness of heart and contempt of God's law. Christ's inflexible law, far more rigorous than the old law of Moses, says he that hateth his brother is a murderer. Murder, then, is the commonest of social sins, rather than the rarest. Christ also says that it was for sinners that he came to die, not for the righteous. His love overflows all our sin, and finds no halt at the degrees of guilt which men empha-

size in their shallow judgment. Men judge by consequences, by outward events; God looks upon the heart.

"Looking upon the heart, as far as we may, with God, I say then, you have been guilty of murder, but so have other men. Many a man has cherished a spirit of bitter revenge and hatred against one who had injured him, who has not suffered what you have, not having caused or profited by the death of that person, directly or indirectly; but before God you are perhaps equally guilty.

"I do not count your sin slight. I would not seek to make it small in your own eyes, but I believe that you are released from the guilt and burden borne so long, and should no longer stagger under it. Has not Almighty God given to his servants power and commandment to declare to those who are penitent the absolution and remission of their sins?

"What did our Lord say to the leper who sought his cleansing? 'I will, be thou clean.' Even this he says to you. Throw off that old yoke of bondage. It is your right. Go free in the liberty of the sons of God, but go to sin no more."

These words, spoken with the authority of a priest, and with the solemnity of absolute conviction, brought something of light and release to the troubled heart of Ingraham.

The hour was late, indeed, morning was at hand, when, lifting his face upon which a certain calmness had settled, he said to Gregory, earnestly: —

"I believe I grasp the truth of what you say, and that there is for me a certain peace, a partial release, although forgetfulness never. But this is not enough; the cry of my whole soul is to make restitution in some

sort, somewhere, although how and to whom I cannot see. I still have the stain that I profit by my sin. What can you tell me? Do you see a way for me?"

John Gregory looked at Ingraham steadily for a moment before speaking, and then said very slowly: —

"Do you remember what the Master said to a certain ruler, 'Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and come, follow me'? If you are in earnest, Mr. Ingraham, and if you feel that, as your experience of sin has been in no light and common form, but in a depth of agony which few men ever know, so your repentance should be along no mild and easy lines, but should reach to the foundations of your life — if, I say, you see things thus, and can bear so strong a prescription, I should repeat to you *literally* what Christ said to the rich ruler. It is a hard saying; not every man can receive it."

The two men faced each other in silence for a moment, and Gregory saw the leap of a sudden question in the other's eyes.

"No," he said sternly, as if in answer to a spoken inquiry, "I am not advising you with an eye on my own advantage. My thought was not of my own cause, but of the cause of humanity anywhere. Pardon me if I speak plainly; I could not use a farthing of your money, were it all at my disposal, for building up the work I am seeking to establish in Fraternia. Recall what you heard me say to-night of the true Kingdom of God. I could not use your money, Mr. Ingraham, in seeking to show forth that kingdom; but I could use you, should you wish to come with us, if you came empty-handed."

The lawyer felt the pitiless severity of Gregory's moral standard and all that this dictum implied, but he

did not resist it. His humiliation and submission were sincere, and, for the time at least, controlling; but doubt and conflict were plainly read in his face.

"Is it a hard saying?" John Gregory asked, with a slight smile.

"Yes, harder than you know. I could do what you say, were I alone to be considered; but to reduce my family to beggary, to cut short my career and stain my reputation by the cloud which would inevitably rest upon it in the community by such an unheard-of course of action, to take my wife and daughters from their social world to follow me, sent like a scapegoat into some wilderness — really, Mr. Gregory, what you name is beyond reason!"

Gregory made absolutely no response. After a long silence, Ingraham said thoughtfully: —

"This is about the way I see for myself: from this time on I shall seek to live a humbler and a sincerely Christian life, and shall strive in every way open to me to aid and further the cause of righteousness, with my money and with my influence. In this way I shall bring happiness and satisfaction to my wife, to whom I owe the highest obligation, next to God, instead of destroying her comfort by dragging her with me into some late missionary endeavour or eccentric experiment. Pardon me, Mr. Gregory, if I too speak plainly.

"But this is not all. Although I feel no individual call in the direction of your coöperative colony, and am not over sanguine of its success, I do believe profoundly in you, personally, as I must have shown you. Now I want you to reconsider what you said a little while ago. Frankly, this discriminating between money made in one way or another savours to me of superstition. This

money, which is mine, cannot be destroyed; even you would hardly advise that. Why not put it to a good use, the best possible from your point of view? I have never given away money largely, but I am able to, and I want to seal our interview to-night with a substantial gift."

As he spoke, Ingraham turned to his desk and touched a check-book which lay upon it.

"Mr. Gregory, I want to write my check for fifty thousand dollars to be placed unconditionally in your hands. You want a little church down there in your settlement, and you want it beautiful, worthy of its purpose; you want a library — both are necessary to carry on the kind of work you project. Here they are," and again he touched the little leather book with his forefinger; "let me do that much as a memorial of this night and what you have done for me."

John Gregory met the look of sincere and even anxious appeal with which these words were spoken with unyielding, although not unkindly, firmness.

"This is a generous impulse on your part, Mr. Ingraham. Do not for a moment think I fail to appreciate it. You are right; the money must be used, and will be, I hope, promptly and wisely. You must pardon me a certain over nicety perhaps in preferring not to build my church in Fraternia, or even my library, with it. You will find plenty of men less fastidious, and no one but myself will, I suppose, have reason to entertain such scruples."

Gregory had risen, and was ready now to go. It was four o'clock, he found, by his watch, and it had been a long vigil; but, while Ingraham's face was haggard and even ghastly, that of Gregory was unchanged in its massive firmness and its strong, fine lines.

Ingraham stood at his desk plainly chagrined and ill at ease.

"In your eyes, I see," he said ruefully, "I am still in the place of the man who went away sorrowful because he had great possessions."

"Perhaps," said Gregory; "it is too soon to tell."

"Every man must judge for himself, Mr. Gregory, when it comes to the supreme acts of his life."

"Yes," said the other, sadly; "to the supreme acts or to the supreme compromises. Will you excuse me now? I believe that I must go." Gregory held out his hand, which Ingraham grasped with eagerness. "You have honoured me by your confidence and your generosity. Count me your friend if you will. Good night."

CHAPTER XXVII

I tire of shams, I rush to be.— Emerson.

Gertrude Ingraham was still unmarried, still pretty, still charming in her dainty, high-bred way.

Perhaps the thought crossed Keith Burgess's mind as he joined her in her father's library that evening, after their return from Gregory's lecture, that she would have been, as a wife, a shade less *exigeante* than Anna.

Anna, shrinking from the small coin of discussion of so great themes, had gone directly to their room, — the room which had been Keith's on his first visit to Burlington. Keith remained in the library to accept the refreshment which Gertrude had prepared for their return, and found the situation altogether pleasing. It was a rest to a sensitive, nervous man like himself to sit down with a pretty woman who had no startling theories of life and conduct; one who had always moved, and who would always choose to move, on the comfortable lines of convention, instead of seeking some other path for herself, rough and lonely.

Perhaps Keith lingered all the more willingly to-night because he perceived a rough and lonely path opening visibly before him, into which he must in all probability turn full soon.

"What did you think of Mr. Gregory?" asked Gertrude Ingraham over her tea-cups.

"He is a tremendous speaker," said Keith, soberly;

"I never heard a man who could mould an audience to his will as he does. You were not there to-night."

"No, but I heard him before you and Mrs. Burgess came, night before last. I think he has the finest physique of any orator I ever heard. Don't you think that is one source of his power? There is something absolutely majestic about him when he is speaking. He seems to overpower you — you *must* agree with him, whether you do or not."

"Then do you accept this new doctrine of his, Miss Ingraham?"

"You mean that there should be no social distinctions, no aristocratic and privileged class, no wealth and no poverty, and all that? I do not know what he said to-night, you see, but that is the line on which he has been speaking."

"Yes, that is what it all comes to."

"Why, no, of course I don't believe in it, when I get away from Mr. Gregory," said Gertrude, laughing prettily; "because I really think he is going against the fundamental laws of God. There have always been rich people and poor people, and it was intended that there always should be, I think."

"It does seem absolutely impracticable to carry out any such theory in actual life. Certainly it would be under existing conditions. It can only be done by radical, by revolutionary methods. Have you heard what Mr. Gregory is actually doing to illustrate his theory? Have you heard of Fraternia?"

Gertrude Ingraham lifted her chin with a roguish little movement and nodded with a charming smile.

"Yes, I have heard of Fraternia too! Isn't it droll? That is why I didn't go to-night, you see. I was afraid

Mr. Gregory would get hold of me with that irresistible power of his, and then I should have to go and work in a cotton mill!" and with this Gertrude lifted her eyebrows with an expression of plaintive self-pity which Keith found very taking. "I'm afraid I shouldn't like it," she added archly; "it would be so new, and one's hands would get so horrid!"

They laughed together, Keith naturally noting the delicacy of the small white hands which were manipulating the transparent china on the low table between them. Then Mrs. Ingraham and others coming into the room after them, Keith rose with graceful courtesy to serve them and to draw them into the conversation. But all the while Keith had a sense that he was turning against himself the sharpest weapons which could have been found, nothing being so instinctively dreaded by him as to put himself in an absurd situation, to awaken ridicule, even his own.

Just below the surface of his thought there lay two formidable facts, like sunk, threatening rocks seen darkly under smooth water. He knew that Anna would propose to him that they should throw themselves into Gregory's enterprise, and become disciples of the new school; and he knew that having cut off hitherto, involuntarily or otherwise, each deepest desire of her soul for the service of others, he should not dare to thwart her in this. If she wished to do this thing, he must join her in it.

Keith had himself been deeply moved by Gregory. The old passion for sacrifice and self-devotion had stirred again within him. He felt the high courage, the generosity, the strong initiative of Gregory; he was thrilled at the sight of a man who could throw himself unreservedly into a difficult and dangerous crusade, simply

for an ideal, with all to lose and nothing to gain. He too had once marched to that same music; his blood was stirred, and he felt something of the enthusiasm of his student years, rising warm within him. He perfectly understood the motions of Anna's spirit, and shared in them, up to a certain point. This point was reached when he touched the limit set by his inborn and inherited conservatism, his constitutional preference for things as they were, and his quick dread of making himself absurd. And now, Gertrude Ingraham with her pretty mocking had suddenly put the whole thing before him in the light he dreaded most.

Anna was not thus divided in her mind, and could not have been. Something of the steadfast simplicity of her ancient German ancestry preserved her from this characteristically American form of sensitiveness. She could have adopted without hesitation, any outward forms, however out of conformity to usage, however grotesque in the eyes of others, if she had felt the inward call. Gregory's stern and lofty utterances had come to her with full prophetic weight, and had left nothing in her to rise up in doubt or gainsaying.

In this mood Keith found her. She was standing, still fully dressed, before the chimney-piece, where he had sat one night and dreamed at once of her and Gertrude Ingraham. Her hands were clasped and hanging before her; her face was slightly pale, and her eyes strangely large and luminous. Standing before her, Keith took her clasped hands between his, and looked at her with a questioning smile.

"Well, dear," he said, "what is it?"

"You know," she answered softly. "Was it not to you what it was to me? Is it not the very chance we

wish, to redeem our poor lost hopes of service? — to leave all the luxuries and privileges and advantages, and share the world's sorrows? to become poor and humble as our Master was? to give what we have received? Oh, Keith, is it to be, or must another hope go by?"

As Anna thus cried out, the solemn appeal of her nature, austere, and yet full-charged with noble passion, breaking at last through the barriers which had long held it back, gave her an extraordinary spiritual grandeur. There was something of awe in the look with which her husband regarded her. Weapons of fear and doubt and cavil fell before that celestial sternness in her eyes, — a look we see sometimes in the innocent eyes of young children.

"It is to be, Anna. You shall have your way this time, my wife."

The words were spoken reverently, with grave gentleness, and Keith's own sweet courtesy. Was it Anna's fault that she failed, in the exaltation of her mood, to catch the sadness in them?

Keith was hardly conscious of it himself. He was thinking, on an unspoken parallel, that he would rather be privileged to adore Anna Mallison in a moment like this, even though she led him in a rough and lonely path, than to dally with another woman in smoothness and ease.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I took the power in my hand
And went against the world;
'Twas not so much as David had,
But I was twice as bold.

I aimed my pebble, but myself
Was all the one that fell.
Was it Goliath was too large,
Or only I too small?

— EMILY DICKINSON.

We all have need of that prayer of the Breton mariner, "Save us, O God! Thine ocean is so large and our little boats are so small." — FARRAR.

"TRUNKS checked for Utopia! Direct passenger route without change of cars! Ye gods, it doth amaze me!"

Thus Professor Ward, with a sardonic and yet discomfited smile, standing in the studio of his friend Pierce Everett, in Fulham. The room was in the disorder of a radical breaking up; packing boxes standing about and litter strewn everywhere.

Everett in his shirt sleeves was piling on a table a mass of draperies which he had taken from the wall. He was covered with dust, but his face was full of joyous excitement.

"Yes, my good friend — straight for Utopia now!

"'Get on board, chil'en,
Get on board, chil'en,
For there's room for many a more.'"

Everett trolled out the old negro chorus with hilarious enjoyment.

"*Quos Deus vult perdere* — " began Ward, grimly.

"Oh, we're all mad, you know. We are simply not so mad as the rest of you," interrupted Everett, gayly. "We have intervals of sanity, and are taking advantage of one of them to get out of the mad-house, leaving you other fellows to keep up your unprofitable strife with phantoms by yourselves, while we actually — yes, we even dare to believe it — *live*. Think of that, Ward, if you have the imagination!" Ward shook his head. "No, you haven't; that is so. If you had, you could not have listened to Gregory unmoved."

"Confound Gregory," muttered Ward. "What did you ever get the man here for, turning our world upside down!"

"That has been the occupation of seers and prophets from the beginning, I believe," retorted Everett, carelessly.

"Seers and prophets!" cried Ward, angrily, "that is what I can stand least of all. This posing as a kind of nineteenth century John the Baptist strikes me as exquisitely ridiculous."

Everett's eyes flashed dangerously, but he made no rejoinder.

"I saw your John the Baptist this morning in the Central Station buying his railway ticket and morning paper like any other average man. The locusts and wild honey were not in evidence."

"No, he doesn't take nourishment habitually in railway stations," put in Everett, coolly.

"I didn't see any leathern girdle about his loins, either, although of course he may wear it next the skin

for penitential purposes. His clothing appeared to be a species of camel's hair — "

"Falsely so called," put in Everett; "it is really English tweed. Very good quality."

"Yes, I'll venture to say that is true. Your prophet of the wilderness strikes me as knowing a good thing when he sees it. Plague take the fellow! He has just that sort of brute force and sheer overbearing personal dominance, which you idealists and credulous take for spiritual authority."

"Come now, Ward, we may as well keep our tempers and treat this matter decently. Nothing is gained by calling names. You are naturally prejudiced against a man who attacks the existing social order, and suggests that even the rulers of the synagogue and the great teachers of the schools have something yet to learn. Gregory is radical, revolutionary perhaps, but not a whit more so than the New Testament makes him. He is an absolutely conscientious man; he has given up every personal ambition, wealth, position, all that most men cling to — "

"In order to become a Dictator, in a field where there is very little competition."

Everett suppressed the irritation which this interposition aroused, and continued in a lighter tone, —

"You are enough of a dictator yourself to see this point, which had escaped the rest of us. I can see that it is a little bitter to you to have Mrs. Burgess seeking another spiritual and intellectual adviser, — going after other gods, as it were."

"Yes," said Ward, gravely; "it makes me sick at heart to see a woman like Mrs. Burgess, with all that glorious power of self-devotion of hers, throwing herself

blindly into this wild, Quixotic experiment — sure to end in disappointment and defeat. It is mournful, most mournful," and Ward shook his head in melancholy fashion. "And when it comes to Keith," he resumed, "alas! our brother! Poor Keith, with his life-long habits of luxurious ease, his conventional views of duty, his yardstick imagination, and his wretched health — to think of such a man being torn from all the amenities of a refined Christian home, and carted across lots, Government bonds and all, to be set down in some malarial swamp to dig ditches with a set of ploughmen, to prove, forsooth! that all men are created free and equal," and Ward groaned and bent his head as if overcome by the picture he had called up.

Lifting his head suddenly, he added in a tone of pensive rumination.

"He is one of those men Thoreau tells of, who would not go a-huckleberrying without a medicine chest; and he would perish, I am convinced, if deprived of improved sanitary plumbing."

"All very clever," said Everett, "but I will take the liberty of mentioning the fact that the Burgess's physician hails the North Carolina project as the very best thing which could happen for Keith's health."

Hardly had he finished the sentence when a light knock was heard on the half-open door of the studio, and Anna Burgess, at Everett's word, stepped into the room.

She wore a thin black gown, for the day was warm, and a broad-brimmed hat of some transparent black substance threw the fine shape of her head and the pure tints of her face into striking relief. A handful of white jonquils was fastened into the front of her gown, and

the freshness of the June day seemed to enter the dusty, despoiled studio with her.

Both men stood at gaze before her with deference and admiration in every line and look. With a delicate flush rising in her cheeks, Anna gave her hand to each, and spoke a word of greeting in which her natural shyness and her acquired social grace were mingled to a manner of peculiar charm.

"I ran up to hand you these papers for Mr. Gregory," she said to Everett, a vibration of suppressed joy in her full, low voice which he had never heard before. "You know he said he would like it if you would bring them," and she placed a long envelope in his hand. "No, I cannot stop a moment, Keith is waiting for me in the carriage. I did not give the papers to the maid because I wanted to say to you, Mr. Everett, that Keith does not see it any differently, — about the estate, you know. He pledges the income, freely, altogether, but he feels that the estate itself should be kept intact."

"Thank Heaven, he has a spark of reason left!" exclaimed Ward under his breath, adding quickly, —

"Pardon me, Mrs. Burgess, but you know I am not a Gregorian psalm myself, yet."

Anna turned to him with her rare smile, less brilliant than clear and luminous.

"But I was so glad you came to the house, Professor Ward, and heard Mr. Gregory," she said with gracious courtesy; "we cannot expect every one to follow out these new theories practically as we hope to do, but at least we want every one we care about to know really what they are."

"Do you think that many of those present at your house that afternoon were inclined to accept Mr.

Gregory's gospel, if I may so call it?" asked Ward, respectfully.

"Of course not," interjected Everett, "there was no one there but cranks and critics."

Anna's face clouded a little. "No," she said simply. "Fulham is not a good field for such a message; it was quite different in Burlington. Most of them went away saying it would be very fine if it were not wholly impossible."

"And it does not occur to you, does it, Mrs. Burgess," Ward pressed the question with undisguised earnestness, "that perhaps they were right? that there is something to be said for the old order, as old as the race? that possibly certain distinctions are inherent in the nature of things? Such distinctions, for instance, as separate you," and Ward gave the pronoun a freight of significance to carry, "from that man," and he indicated a labourer who had just left the room with an immense box of merchandise on his broad, bent shoulders, and whose slow, heavy steps could now be heard on the stairs below.

He had struck the wrong chord.

"Professor Ward," cried Anna, her voice even lower than its wont, but her emphasis the more intense, "did that man choose to be reduced to the life and little more than the faculties of a beast of burden, to be a brother to the ox, to live a blind, brutalized, animal existence, with neither joy nor star?"

She paused a moment, and then added, with indescribable pathos dimming the kindling light in her eyes: —

"It is that man, Professor Ward, and what he stands for, that sends me to Fraternia, if perhaps I can yet atone. It is I that have made that man what he is, and

you, and all of us who have clung gladly to our powers and privileges, and dared to believe that we were made for the heights of life, and men like him for the abyss. If we could read our New Testament once as if it were not an old story! If we, for one moment, could lay our social cruelties beside that pattern shown us in the mount!"

The deep heart of her and the innermost motive power broke forth from Anna's usual quiet and reserve in these last words with thrilling influence upon both men. She was beautiful as she spoke, but with the beauty of some Miriam or Cassandra, — a woman, as had been said of her long before, "to die for, not to play games with."

Professor Ward, the irritation of his earlier mood quite gone, stood regarding Anna as she spoke with a sadness as profound as it was wholly unaffected. Having spoken, she turned to go.

"Let me say one word, Mrs. Burgess," he said, extending his hand to detain her a moment. "I sympathize deeply with your purposes, and I am not wholly incapable of appreciating your motives. From my heart I shall bid you God-speed on your way when your time comes to go out into this new spiritual adventure. It will be none the less noble because it is impossible."

"Good-by," she said, and smiled.

CHAPTER XXIX

Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring ?
O sweet Content !
Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears ?
O Punishment !
Then he that patiently Want's burden bears
No burden bears, but is a king, a king.
O sweet Content, O sweet, O sweet Content !
Work apace, apace, apace, apace,
Honest labour bears a lovely face.

— THOMAS DEKKER, 1600.

A VALLEY, two thousand feet above the sea level, narrowing at its upper or northern end to a ravine piercing thickly wooded hills, but widening gradually southward, until, a mile lower down the mountain stream which issues from the gorge, it becomes a broad sunny meadow land.

On a day in the middle of March, when the sun shone warm and a turquoise sky arched smiling over this valley, signs of human activity and energy prevailed on every side. In the bottom lands men were ploughing the broad level fields; here the river had been dammed, forming a pond, on the bank of which stood a large picturesque building sheathed with dark-green shingles. From the wide and open windows of this building the sound of whirring spindles and the joyous laughter of girls and men issued.

Higher up the valley men were at work building a light bridge of plank across the creek, while others were carting newly sawed lumber, with its strong pungent

smell, from the sawmill below. On the eastern side of the valley, between this bridge and the mills half a mile south, were scattered or grouped at irregular intervals, forty or fifty small cabins, some of log, others of unplaned boards; thatched, or covered in red tile. Men and women were at work in the damp mould of the gardens by which these cabins were surrounded, and fresh green things were shooting up. On the opposite side of the stream, on a wooded knoll, stood a large, low, barrack-like building with a red roof, and near it a few cabins. It was opposite this group of buildings that the foot-bridge was in process of making, to supersede a single plank and rail which had hitherto connected the banks of the stream. Down the valley from this small and separate settlement stretched fields already under cultivation, for corn, potatoes, and cotton.

There were no streets in this rustic settlement. Footpaths led to the cottage doors through the thin, coarse grass, and along the eastern side of the little river; and between its bank and the houses ran a rough wagon road, deeply rutted now by the wheels of the lumber wagons in the soft, red soil. To the north and east the hills rose abruptly, covered with oak and pine, and the aromatic fragrance of the latter was in the air, mingling with the scent of the soil. Beyond the lower hills to the west loomed the shoulders of dim, blue mountains, while looking south, down the shining river, beyond a belt of woodland, the valley broadened out to the sunny plain stretching to the horizon line.

The limpid clearness of the air, the fragrance of the forest and the earth, the musical flow of the little river, the wonderful brilliancy of the sky, with the vast uplift of the mountains, gave a sense of wild perfection to the

ensemble. Such was Fraternia in the morning of its second spring.

It was during that decade which saw the sudden springing into life of so large a number of communistic organizations and settlements throughout the country, mainly in the south and west. Many of these experiments were crude and obscure; most of them were shortlived. They were founded on widely different social conceptions, ranging from those of unlimited license and rank anarchism up to the high ideals of the life of Christian brotherhood set forth in the early church.

The latter was the foundation of John Gregory's colony in Fraternia. Inflexible morality and blamelessness of Christian living were his cardinal laws. Built upon them was the superstructure of economic and social equality, of labour sharing, and of domestic simplicity.

Thus far unusual promise attended the adventure, and peace and good-will reigned in the little community.

Toward the upper end of the village half a dozen men were at work around a circular excavation not more than five or six feet in diameter, which had been lined with irregular slabs and blocks of stone patched together with clay. In blue overalls thickly bespattered with red mud and the sticky clay, a man was working on his knees at the edge of this basin. It was Keith Burgess. Near him, measuring with rule and line and marking out the width of the coping, stood the artist, Pierce Everett. Their fellow-workmen were two Irishmen — big, active fellows, with honest eyes — and a wiry little black-a-vised Jew, a quondam foreman in a New York sweat-shop. He was mixing clay and laying the

stone of the coping, while the Irishmen were at work in an open trench through which ran the pipe which was to conduct the water from a spring in the ravine above into the new reservoir.

Emerging from the woods below the dam a little crowd of children came straying up the valley, laughing and shouting, and jumping gayly over the pools of red mud in the road. Their hands were full of wild flowers, — bloodroot, and anemones, and arbutus; their hair was blown about in the wind; their eyes were shining. Among them, giving her hand to a little girl who walked with a crutch, walked Anna Burgess, her face as joyous as theirs, and a free, unhampered vigour and grace in every line of her figure. She was the head teacher in the village school, and was known to her scholars, and, indeed, quite generally in the little community, as "Sister Benigna."

This name, "Benigna," which had come down in Anna's family for generations, and had been given her as a second name, had not been used for many years, save by her mother, who still clung loyally to the full "Anna Benigna." Who it was in Fraternia who had revived the beautiful old Moravian name was not known, but the use of it had been quickly established, especially among the children and the foreign folk.

The habit of using "Brother" and "Sister" with the given name in ordinary social intercourse was common, although not universal, in Fraternia. Anna's assistants in the school — a pale, little English governess, who had apparently never known stronger food than tea and bread until she came to Fraternia, and a rosy-cheeked German kindergartner — were among the little flock, their hands overflowing with wild flowers, and their faces

with the high delight the spring day brought them. It was Saturday morning, and a holiday.

Suddenly there was a shout from some boys who were foremost in the company, and they came scampering back to Anna exclaiming that the "fountain" was almost finished, and, perhaps, the water would soon be turned into it. By common consent the whole party hastened on and soon encircled the workmen at the basin with noisy questions and merry chatter. It was to be so fine not to have to go up to the spring in the ravine with pails and pitchers any more. Could they surely have the water here for Sunday? Then Fräulein Frieda told them how the girls in her country came to such fountains with their jugs, and carried them away full on their heads. She showed them with a tin pail, found lying in the clay, just how it was done, walking away with firm, balanced step, the pail unsupported on her pretty flaxen-haired head, on which the sun shone dazzlingly. The little girls were greatly delighted, and all declared they should learn to carry their water pots home on their heads from the *Quelle*, as Fräulein Frieda called it.

Anna stood at the edge of the basin, Keith at her feet, on his knees, with the trowel in his hands, smiling up at her, the little lame girl still at her side, a trace of wistfulness in her eyes as she watched the others.

"We will not carry our water pails on our heads, you and I, will we, little Judith?" Anna asked, kind and motherly. "*We* want our brains to grow, and it might crowd them down; don't you think so?"

The swarthy Jew looked up from the clay he was mixing with quick, instinctive gratitude. Judith was

his child. He grinned a broad and rather hideous grin, and exclaimed in a broken dialect: —

"Das ist so, Kleine; shust listen to our lady! She knows. She says it right."

Pierce Everett's dark eyes flashed with sudden enthusiasm. Turning to Anna he bowed profoundly and said low to Keith, as well as to her: —

"There you have it! Barnabas has found your title — 'our lady'!"

Anna looked into Everett's dark eager eyes with her quiet smile, and was about to speak, when a sudden noise of grating and rattling and horses' hoofs behind them caused them all three to turn and look down the river. A horse and stone drag were approaching rapidly, driven by John Gregory, who stood on the drag, which was loaded with big clean pebbles from the river-bed. He wore a coarse grey flannel shirt, the collar turned off a little at the throat, and rough grey trousers tucked into high rubber boots, which reached to the thighs. The cloth cap on his head with its vizor bore a certain resemblance to a helmet, and altogether the likeness of the whole appearance to that of a Roman warrior in his chariot did not escape the three friends who watched its approach in the motley crowd around the basin.

Gregory drove his drag close up to the edge of the coping, now nearly laid, greeted the company with a courteous removal of his hat and a cordial Good-morning, then discharged the load of pebbles in a glinting heap on the soft red earth.

There was no conscious assumption of mastery or direction in Gregory's manner, nothing could have been simpler or more democratic than the impartial comradery

with which he joined the others, nevertheless the sense that the master was among them was instantly communicated throughout the little group. Up in the trench, nearly to the base of the cliffs which marked the entrance to the ravine, one Irishman said to the other, in a tone of satisfaction not unmixed with good-natured sarcasm: —

"Himsilf's come now. The gintlemin masons will git to rights or they'll lose their job, d'ye mind, Patrick?"

"Oh, ay," said the other, "an' the same to yersilf, if ye ivir noticed it."

There was a little silence even among the chattering children as Gregory stooped by Everett's side, pulled up with the ease of mighty muscle two or three stones, took the trowel from Keith's hand and a hod of mortar from the waiting Barnabas, and set the stones over on a truer line, laughing the while with the men and turning aside the edge of criticism with frank self-disparagement, as being himself but a tyro.

A curious consequence of Gregory's appearance on the scene after this sort, was the dwarfed effect of the men around him, who suddenly seemed to have shrunk in stature and proportions, and whose motions, beside the virile force and confident freedom of his, appeared incompetent and weak.

Anna had drawn back from her place near the basin's edge. Gregory had not looked at her nor she at him directly. In fact, they habitually, for some reason they themselves could not define, avoided each other, and yet could not avoid a piercing consciousness, when together, of every look and word of the other. A sudden shyness and subduing had fallen instantly upon Anna's bright mood, and, while the others watched every look and

motion of Gregory with almost breathless interest, she stood apart and arranged little Judith's flowers with apparent preoccupation.

Tossing the trowel back to Keith, with whom he exchanged a few words of question, Gregory next hastened with long strides up the line of the trench to the place where the Irishmen were at work. Here was a primitive moss-grown trough, into which the water of the spring had hitherto been conducted, and to which all the people had been obliged to come for their supply of drinking water. The new iron pipe already replaced the rude wooden conduit which had done duty until now, but the water still flowed into the trough, and would do so until, the basin completed, the connection might be made between the two sections of pipe.

Under Gregory's direction this was now effected, and the water of the spring, if there was no flaw, should now flow unimpeded into the basin below. To test the basin, it was Gregory's purpose to make the experiment at once.

Presently there was a shout, exulting and joyous, from the company below.

"The water is here! The water! The water!" rose the cry into the stillness of the valley. The men at work upon the bridge left their work, and hastened to join the little crowd.

With strides even longer than before, Gregory came down again, the Irishmen following him in a scramble to keep up. Joy was in all their faces, and the deepest joy of all in that of Gregory. They stood together and watched the jet of water as it sprang from the mouth of the pipe, turbid at first, but gradually becoming clear and sparkling, and fell with a gentle,

musical plashing into the stone fountain. There was complete silence for a little space, as they looked intently at the increasing depth of the gathering pool, and then, bringing down his hands with a will on the shoulders of Keith and Everett, Gregory exclaimed: —

"Men, you have done well, all of you! It holds, do you see? It is tight as a ship. Hurrah!"

They all joined in a great cheer, and then, swiftly finding where she stood, or knowing, as he always seemed to know, instinctively, Gregory's eyes sought Anna Burgess.

"Will Sister Benigna come up here?" he asked quietly, with the unhesitating steadiness of the man who knows just what he means to do.

Anna came slowly forward, and stood on the new-laid coping, by the side of Gregory, greatly wondering. Just beyond her was Keith, side by side with Barnabas Rosenblatt. Meanwhile, Gregory had taken from his pocket a small folding drinking-cup of shining metal, which he had held in the flow of the spring water until it was thoroughly purified. Turning now to look at all those who stood round about, he said: —

"Brothers, sisters, little children, this water is the good gift of God. Let this fountain be now consecrated to all pure and holy uses. By the wish which I believe to be in every one of you, let the first who shall drink of this living water from the new fountain be our Sister Benigna."

With these words Gregory filled the cup from the sparkling outgush of the spring, the water so cold that the polished cup was covered with frosty dimness, and with simple seriousness handed it to Anna. Affection and reverence were in the eyes of all the people as they

watched her while with uncovered head, calm brow, and the fine simplicity of unconsciousness she took the cup and drank. But with the first touch of her lips to the cup the hand in which she held it trembled; and when she drained the last drop, it trembled still. As Anna stepped back, having drunk, into the ranks, Gregory lifted his hand, and with the gesture which commands devotion repeated the ancient words, —

"'O most high, almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honour, and all blessing!

"'Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and cloud, calms and all weather, by the which thou upholdest in life all creatures.

"'Praised be my Lord for our sister, water, who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and clear.'"

Then with a deeper solemnity and significance in face and voice, he continued: —

"'If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.'

"'Jesus said, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.'"

It was noon, and turning they all dispersed, each to his own place, a deepened gladness in their faces. But as for Anna Burgess, a dimness was upon her joy, a thrilling undercurrent of dread and wonder which she could not understand; for she had drunk of the Cup of Trembling — and knew it not.

CHAPTER XXX

We've toiled and failed; we spake the word;
None hearkened; dumb we lie;
Our Hope is dead, the seed we spread
Fell o'er the earth to die.

What's this? For joy our hearts stand still,
And life is loved and dear,
The lost and found the cause hath crowned,
The Day of Days is here.

— William Morris.

The Burgesses had come to Fraternia in the preceding December, although Keith had soon left again, having still many business concerns to recall him to Fulham. The house there was now closed, and the life there for them presumably ended, and, late in February, Keith had returned to Fraternia.

Anna had employed the months between their decision to join the coöperative colony and their actual journey to the South, in taking a short course in nursing in a Fulham hospital, reviving her old knowledge of the subject, gained in her girlhood in Burlington. She had it in mind to fit herself thus as thoroughly as the brief interval allowed, for the duties of a trained nurse to the little community, this being an occupation at once congenial to herself and important for the general good. For uniformity of service was by no means according to John Gregory's plan, and Gertrude Ingraham might not have found herself shut up to the cotton mill even if she had done so incredible a thing as to throw in her

fortunes with Fraternia. All must labour, and all must labour for the general good, — one of Gregory's prime maxims being, If a man will not work, neither shall he eat; but as far as practicable that labour was to be on the line of each person's best capacity, choice, and development. Thus Keith Burgess's feat of stonelaying had not been enforced, but self-chosen, as an expression of his good-will in the sharing the coarser labours of the people. The work to which he had been assigned by Gregory was clerical, not manual, being that of secretary to the colony.

Anna, thus far, had had no opportunity for any especial use of her vocation as nurse, the families of Fraternia being remarkably healthy under the simple and wholesome conditions of their life, and serious illness unknown during that winter. Her trained and well-equipped mind obviously fitted her for a work of intellectual rather than industrial character, and the duties of teaching the children of the colony five hours a day — the required time of service for the women — were given to her by common consent.

Neither at the time when she was chosen to this service, nor at any other, had John Gregory directly communicated his wishes to Anna or discussed his plans with her; and yet, from the day of her arrival in Fraternia he had perhaps never formed a plan which was not in some subtle manner shaped by unconscious reference to her. In her own way, Anna's personality was hardly less conspicuous than his; and these two invisibly and involuntarily modified each the other's action and deliberation as the orbits of two stars are influenced by their mutual attraction and repulsion.

By the whole habit and choice of his life John Greg-

ory was a purist in morals and in his personal practice of simplicity. The most frugal fare and the simplest domestic appliances served his turn by preference, although he had been born and bred in comparative luxury. He was free and fraternal with men; gently respectful to women, whom he yet never treated as if they were superior to men by force of their weakness, but rather as being on a basis of accepted equality; while to little children he always showed winning tenderness. Socially, however, he scrupulously avoided intercourse with women, with a curious, undeviating persistency which almost suggested ascetic withdrawal. The other men of the colony, several of whom were men of some social rank and mental culture, found it pleasant to stop on the woodland paths or by the stream, all the more in these soft spring days, and exchange thought and word, light or grave, with the girls and women, but never once had Gregory been seen to do this, or to visit the households presided over by women on any errand whatever. Whether a line of action which thus inevitably separated him more and more from the domestic life of the people, was pursued by deliberate purpose or by the accident of personal inclination was not clear, but certain it was that the fact contributed to the distinction and separation which seemed inevitably to belong to Gregory. With all his simplicity of life and democratic brotherliness of conversation, he lived and moved in Fraternia with an effect of one on a wholly different plane from the others, and with the full practical exercise of a dictatorship which no one resented because all regarded him with a species of hero-worship as manifestly the master of the situation.

His residence was in one of the small cabins on the western side of the river, to which the bridge gave convenient access. The other cabins served, one as a rude, temporary library, the other as storehouse, while the large barrack-like building furnished bachelor quarters for the unmarried men. Gregory, since Everett's arrival, had shared his house with the artist. Their meals were taken in common with the other men. No one was in the habit of entering the house, Gregory having a kind of office, agreeably furnished, at the cotton mill, where he was usually to be found when not at work in field or wood. This was, however, often the case, for he never failed to discharge the daily quota of manual labour which he had assigned himself; and it was noticeable to all that if any task were of an offensive or difficult nature, he was the one to assume it first and as a matter of course. It was owing to this characteristic, perhaps more than to any other, save his singular personal ascendency, that the silent dictatorship of Gregory in the little community was so cheerfully accepted. Nominally the government of the village was in the hands of a board of directors, with an inner executive committee, and of which Gregory was chairman. Several women served on the larger board. Keith Burgess was a director; Anna's name had not been proposed for the office. There had been but one vacancy in the board on their arrival, which was sufficient reason. The councils of the directors were held weekly in Gregory's office, and thus far a good degree of harmony prevailed.

Again it was Saturday morning. A week had passed which had brought many days of heavy rain. The river, swollen and yellow, dashed noisily down from the gorge and filled its channel below with deep and urgent

current. On its turbid flood appeared from time to time newly felled logs, floated down from the regions above, where Fraternia men were at work, taking advantage of the swollen river for conveying their lumber to the sawmill. A west wind, the night before, had blown the clouds before it, and this morning the sun shone from an effulgent sky; the wind had died to a soft breeze laden with manifold fragrance; and in place of the chill of the north, the air possessed the indescribable softness and balm of the southern spring.

It was again a busy morning in Fraternia, and everywhere, and in all the homely tasks, thrilled the unchecked joy in simple existence of innocent hearts living out their normal bent for mutual help and burden-sharing. In the garden ground around their house, which was high up the valley in a group of three others, one of which contained the common kitchen and dining room for the inmates of all, Anna Burgess was at work in her garden, sowing and planting in the damp soil. Glancing down the valley, she could see Everett hard at work with another man, who had been an architect in Burlington, erecting a little thatched pavilion, of original design, graceful and rustic, to protect the new and precious fountain from the sun, and keep its water clean and serviceable. Across the river, in the library, Keith, she knew, was at work at his bookkeeping, and also at the task of collecting excerpts from the writings of social economists for use in an address which he was preparing. A new mental activity had been stimulated in Keith by the change of climate and conditions, and the influx of new ideas; and the ease and cheerfulness with which he had adapted himself to the primitive habits of pioneer life, would have amazed his friend Ward.

Barnabas had been gathering one or two sizable slabs of stone which had been left from the lining and coping of the fountain, and Anna watched him a moment as, having loaded them into a wheelbarrow, he proceeded to carry them down to the new bridge, and so across to the west side of the river. She hardly cared to wonder what he was about to do, being otherwise absorbed, and her eyes did not follow him as he wheeled his burden on up the knoll on which were the library and the house of Gregory, set in their bit of pine wood.

The door of Gregory's cabin stood open, as was customary in Fraternia in mild weather. Barnabas dropped the burden from his barrow just before the open door, stood to wipe the sweat from his forehead, and then, kneeling, began the self-imposed effort of placing the stones together for a low step, which was yet lacking to the rudely finished house. As he worked, he now and then lifted his eyes and glanced into the interior of the house which he had never entered. It had the walls and ceiling of unplaned, uncovered boards of all the Fraternia houses; the floor was absolutely bare and absolutely clean, damp in spots and redolent of soap from recent scrubbing. The open windows let in the sun-warmed, piney air, but the light was obscured, the trees growing close to the house, and a dim gold-green twilight reigned in the silent room. A door stood open into the second room where two narrow iron beds came within the field of vision. There was the ordinary chimney, built of brick, of ample proportions, with a pine shelf running across, and in the fireplace logs of fat pine laid for a blaze in the evening, which was still sure to be cool. Plain wooden arm-chairs stood near the

hearth; an uncovered table of home manufacture, clumsy and heavy, in the middle of the room, was thickly strewn with books and papers and writing materials. It was the typical Fraternia interior, — bare, and yet not comfortless, and with its own effect of simple distinction, conveyed by absolute cleanness, order, and the absence of the superfluous.

But it was none of these details which caught the eye of Barnabas. Above the chimney there was fastened by hidden screws close against the wall, so that it had the effect of a panel, a picture, unframed, showing the figure of a slender girl with uplifted head and solemn eyes, set against an Oriental background. It was Everett's study of the Girlhood of the Virgin, and besides it there was no picture nor decoration of any sort in the place.

Each time he lifted his eyes from the stones before him to the picture whose high lights gleamed strangely through the dimness of the room within, Barnabas was more impressed with some elusive resemblance in the face; and at last, striking the stone with his hand, he murmured to himself in his native tongue, "Now I have it! The damsel there is like our lady when she prays."

Meanwhile the river ran between and thundered over the dam below; the red roofs gleamed warm in the sun, and Anna, down on her knees like Barnabas, on a bit of board, was tending her bulbs with loving hands, while within her was springing a very rapture of poetic joy. Almost for the first time in her life she was conscious of unalloyed happiness. Was it because the sky was blue? or because the vital flood of spring beat and surged about her in the river, in the forest, in the air?

Not wholly; nor even because under these kindly influences all the dormant poetic and creative instincts of her nature were stirring into luxuriant blossoming, although all these things filled her with throbbing delight. The deeper root of her joy was in the satisfaction, so long delayed, of her passion for brotherhood with lowly men and poor; the release from the constraint of artificial conventions, and from the painful sense, which she could never escape in the years of her Fulham life, that she owed to every weary toiler who passed her on the street an apology for her own leisure, her luxury and ease.

Suddenly Anna rose, and stood facing the west, her eyes full of light. A voice within her had called and said: —

"I can write poetry now, and I will!" The fulness of energy of joy and fulfilment in her spirit sought expression as naturally as the mountain spring sought its outlet in the fountain below.

Just then her neighbour, in the house on the left, — it was the dining-house, — put her head out of the window and said, reflectively: —

"Say, Sister Benigna, I wish I knew how to get the dinner up into the woods to the men-folks. It's half-past eleven and time it went this minute, and Charley has gone down to Spalding after the mail; but I suppose it's late or something. Anyway he ain't here, and I've got the rest to wait on."

"Why, I could take the dinner pails up to them, Sister Amanda," answered Anna, obligingly. The "men-folks" alluded to were of her own group of families and were felling lumber in the woods north of the valley.

"You couldn't do it alone, but Fräulein Frieda,

she'd be tickled to death to go with you. There she is now," and Sister Amanda flew to the cabin door through which a neatly ordered dinner table could be seen, and shouted down the slope to the young German teacher who had just come over the bridge with some books on her arm from the library.

A few moments later Anna sallied out from the house with Frieda, both carrying well-stored dinner pails.

"No matter," said Anna, smiling at the sudden diversion from her poetic inspiration; "it is better to live brotherhood than to sing brotherhood. But some day, maybe, yet, I shall sing."

CHAPTER XXXI

Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.

—Robert Browning.

Relays of men had been at work in the woods clothing the steep banks of the ravine above Fraternia for three days, even while the rain was falling in torrents. It was absolutely necessary to secure the lumber while the river was of a depth to carry it down stream, and for a time all other work was in abeyance.

Gregory had worked steadily with the rest at the wood cutting, but Keith had told Anna the night before that on Saturday morning he would be obliged to go down to Spalding, the small town in the plain below the valley, on urgent business concerning notes which were coming due and must be extended if possible.

It was therefore with great surprise that Anna, as they approached the spot where the men were at work, heard Frieda exclaim: —

"There is the master himself; see, Sister Benigna!"

They had had a merry scramble up the gorge, but a hard one. The swollen stream had submerged the narrow path by which the ascent was commonly made, and it was only by finding the footholds cut out by the men with their axes in the earth of the dripping, slippery bank above, that Anna and her companion had been

able to make their way on. Holding their pails with one hand and clinging to overhanging branches or roots of ferns and laurel with the other, shaking the splashes of rain from the dripping leaves as they struck their faces, the two had scrambled breathlessly forward; and now, at length, the welcome sound of the axe greeted their ears, and they saw a little beyond, strewing the underbrush, the new chips and shining splinters of stripped bark which told that trees had recently been felled.

Anna had just stopped to exclaim: —

"How good it smells, Frieda, — such a wild, pure smell!" and was laughing at her own choice of adjectives, when Frieda had called her attention to John Gregory. He was standing at no great distance from them in the midst of the rapid, roaring creek where the water reached nearly to the tops of his high boots, and, with a strong pole in both hands, was directing the course of the logs, which were eddying wildly about him on the surface of the torrent, into the proper channel which should carry them down stream.

Frieda's voice attracted his attention to their approach, and without pause he strode through the water, leaped up the bank and was promptly in the path, if it could be called such, before them, holding out both hands to relieve them of their burdens, and smiling a cordial greeting.

Anna's cheeks wore a vivid flush.

"Then you did not go to Spalding?" she asked, seeking to quiet the confusion of her surprise and the immoderate beating of her heart. Frieda, she saw gratefully, was quite as excited; it was so unusual for Mr. Gregory to bestow attentions of this sort upon

them; it was not strange that one should be a little stirred.

"No," he said, leading on in the now broadening path, "I found I could send a letter by Charley, and the men rather needed a long-legged fellow like myself up here this morning. But I see that my doing this has reacted unexpectedly upon you. Charley not being on hand to bring the dinner, our ladies have had to take his place," and Gregory turned toward them as he spoke with regret and apology which were evidently sincere.

"Are you very tired?" he asked simply, looking at Frieda but speaking to Anna.

They both declared that it had been great fun and they were not in the least tired; and indeed the bright bloom of their cheeks, and the laughter in their eyes, and the elastic firmness of their steps were sufficient reassurance.

"I think, Mr. Gregory," said Anna, quite at her ease now, "that Fraternia women can never know anything of that disease of civilization, nervous prostration. It will become extinct in one spot at least."

"'More honoured in the breach than the observance,'" quoted Gregory, "we shall hail its loss."

Soon they reached a little clearing, where, the underbrush trampled down, the rugged steepness of the bank declining to a gentler slope, and the sun having found full entrance by reason of the removal of the larger trees, there was a possibility of finding a dry place to rest. Here they were soon joined by half a dozen men, several of whom had brought their dinner with them, and preparations were made for a fire to heat the coffee which filled one of the pails brought by Anna and Frieda. The

other was solidly packed with sweet, wholesome brown bread and butter and thick slices of meat.

The fat pine chips and splinters burned readily in spite of the all-pervading dampness, and the coffee-pail, suspended over this small camp-fire from a hastily improvised tripod, was soon sending up a deliciously fragrant steam.

The men treated the two women as if they had been foreign princesses, covering a great tree-trunk with their coats for a kind of throne for them, and serving them with coffee in tin cups with much flourish of mock ceremony. This part of the proceedings John Gregory watched from a little distance, leaning against a tree, a smile of quiet pleasure in his eyes. He refused the coffee for himself, drinking always and only water, but ate the bread and meat they handed him with hearty relish and a vast appetite.

By a sort of inevitable gravitation, almost before the meal was concluded, Frieda had strayed off into the woods with Matt Taylor, son of Anna's neighbour, whose devotion to her was one of the especial interests for Fraternia folk that spring. A certain view from the crest of the hill beyond the little clearing was by no means to be missed. Then, one after the other, the men took up their axes and returned to their work; but John Gregory kept his place, and still stood leaning against the tree, facing Anna, the smouldering embers of the fire between.

He had been speaking on a subject in which all had been interested, — the prayer test advocated by Mr. Tyndall, which had attracted the attention of the scientific and religious world of that time. The men had gone away reluctantly, leaving the conversation to

these two. Heretofore Anna had hardly spoken, but now with deepening seriousness she said : —

"I feel the crude, incredible impertinence of such a test as this which Mr. Tyndall has proposed, and yet it brings up very keenly to me my own attitude for many years."

Gregory looked a question, but did not speak, and Anna went on : —

"A good woman whom I once heard speak at Mrs. Ingraham's in Burlington gave me an idea of prayer, quite new to me then, but which I at least partially accepted, and which has had its effect on my inner life ever since."

"It was — ?"

"That we were to pray to God for every small material interest of life, and were to expect definite, concrete, physical return. That if such was not our experience it was because we were not dwelling near God, and were out of harmony with him. This life of answered prayer and perfect demonstrable union which she described was called the 'higher life.'"

"What was your own experience ?"

"It has been a long experience of spiritual defeat. I prayed for years for every temporal need, asked for whatever I deeply desired, and — never — perhaps there was one exception, but hardly more — received an answer to my praying which I could fairly assume to be such."

Anna's face was profoundly sad, as she spoke, with the sense of the baffling disappointments of years.

"In the end what has been the effect on you ?"

"I have ceased to pray at all, Mr. Gregory. I know that sounds very harsh, perhaps very wrong, but I lost

the expectation of a response, and the constant defeat and failure made me bitter and unbelieving. God seemed only to mock my prayers, not to fulfil. It seemed to me at last that I was dishonouring him by praying, and that waiting in silence and patience was shown to be my portion. Do you think that was sinful?"

Anna raised her eyes timidly to Gregory's face with this question, and met the repose and steady confidence of it with a swift presentiment of comfort.

"No," he answered; "I think you were simply struggling to release yourself from the meshes of the net which a mercenary conception of prayer cannot fail to throw over the soul. It was said of John Woolman, and a holier man never lived, that he offered no prayers for special personal favours. I believe the theory of prayer of your Burlington friend not only mistaken, but dangerous and misleading. Instead of such a habit of mind as she described being a 'higher life,' I should call it a lower one. The nearer the man comes to God, the less he prays, not the more, for definite objective things and externals; the more he rests on the great good will of God. Prayer was not designed for man to use to conform a reluctant God to his will, to get things given him, but to conform the man's own blind and erring will to the divine. By this I do not mean to say that no prayers for temporal objects are granted. Many have been, but the soul that feeds itself on this conception of prayer as a system of practical demand and supply lives on husks."

"But there are many promises?" Anna said with hesitation.

"Yes," said Gregory, with the emphasis of sure conviction, crossing the space between them to stand

directly before her, forgetting all his usual scruples; "but you must interpret Scripture by Scripture, by the whole tendency and purpose, not by isolated mottoes which men like to drag out for spiritual decoration, breaking off short all their roots which reach down into the solid rock of universal Truth! Look at our Lord himself — did he ask for 'ease and rest and joys'? It is only as we enter into his spirit that our prayers are answered, and that almost means that we shall cease to pray at all for personal benefits. He prayed, often, whole nights together, but was it that he might win his own cause with the people about him? Was it not rather for the multitudes upon whom he had compassion, and that God the Father should be made manifest in himself? Ah, Sister Benigna, few of us have sounded the depths of this great subject of prayer. It is one of the deepest things of God; and, believe me, it is not until we have cast out utterly the last shred of the notion of childish coaxing of God to do what will please us, that we can catch some small perception of its meaning. But let me say just one thing more: you are too young to count any prayer unanswered. At present you see in part and interpret God's dealings only in part. At the end of life your interpretation will be larger, calmer than it is now. We 'change the cruel prayers we made,' and even here live to praise God that they are broken away 'in his broad, loving will.'"

Anna sat in silence, her eyes downcast, slowly passing in review the nature of her own most ardent prayers and the deep anguish and doubt of their non-fulfilment. Not one, she saw, could bear the high test of likeness to the mind of Christ, not one but had its admixture of selfishness, not one but seemed poor and vain in this

new light. A nobler conception of the relation of her soul to God seemed to dawn within her. She looked up then, and saw upon Gregory's face that inner illumination which belongs to the religious genius. The look of it smote her eyes as if with white and dazzling light, and they fell as if it were impossible to bear it. Then she rose, and they stood for a moment alone and in silence, while a sense of measureless content overflowed Anna's spirit, and for an instant made time and space and human relations as if they were not. So strong upon her was the sense of uplift from the contact with the spirit of Gregory. She hardly knew at first that the incredible had happened. John Gregory had taken her hand in his, with reverent gentleness, for some seconds. He was asking her if he had been able to help her in any wise, and asking it as if he cared very much. She said "yes," quite simply, and turned to go. Frieda was coming back, and they were lingering over long. Slowly they descended the rugged path before them, for a strange trepidation had come over Anna, — a vague, new, disturbing joy.

CHAPTER XXXII

What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? . . . A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. — *St. Luke's Gospel.*

Instead of the masterly good humour, and sense of power, and fertility of resource in himself; instead of those strong and learned hands, those piercing and learned eyes, that supple body, and that mighty and prevailing heart, which the father had, whom nature loved and feared, whom snow and rain, water and land, beast and fish, seemed all to know and to serve, we have now a puny, protected person, guarded by walls and curtains, stoves and down-beds, coaches, and men-servants and women-servants from the earth and the sky. — R. W. Emerson.

The spring passed in Fraternia, and the summer. Not again did John Gregory and Anna come into direct personal communication. They went indeed their several ways with a steadier avoidance of this than before, from an undefined, but instinctive, sense of danger. Nevertheless, the fact that they breathed the same air and shared the same lot in life sufficed to yield in the heart of each an unfailing spring of contentment; while now and again it would happen that Anna, in her schoolroom or cottage, and Gregory, at his work, lifting their eyes at a footstep or a shadow, would be aware that the other had drawn near and passed by, and contentment would give place to nameless joy.

The poetic impulse which Anna had inherited from both parents, but the expression of which had been stifled by the deadening of her high desires which life in Fulham had brought, now developed unchecked. Many influences promoted this development: her clear child-delight in the rich life of nature about her, the release

of her long-cabined spiritual energy, and the stimulation of her powers of discernment and interpretation by contact with the strong intellectual power of Gregory.

Gregory was, in the simple system of life in Fraternia, at once prophet, priest, and king; and his most potent influence over the people was manifest in the Sunday services and in the evening lectures which, for lack of a church, were held in a large empty room on the upper floor of the cotton mill. Anna found in these sermons and lectures the strongest intellectual and spiritual food upon which she had ever fared, and throve apace, having good faculty of assimilation. The verses which she wrote at intervals from a sudden and almost irresistible impulsion were always, when completed, turned over to her husband. Proud and pleased at this new gift of Anna's, it was Keith's habit to take them straightway to Gregory. Anna never knew this. She knew, however, that her poetry found its way into print, and now and then, she found, into the hearts of sincere people. This was new food for unaffected gladness, and she was glad.

The summer, although its fierce continuous heat had been hard to bear, was yet the season *par excellence* for Fraternia, and peace and plenty reigned in the valley. But with the autumn came a change, gradual at first, but later strongly accented. The wholesome occupations of the spring and summer came, of necessity, to a standstill. There was now little vent for the energy and working force of the people, while the scant resources of the narrow valley offered nothing to counteract a dull ennui which settled like a palpable cloud upon them. It had been a bad year for all their crops; the cotton crop had been a total failure, and the mill was shut down.

This threw nearly fifty of the little community into enforced idleness, and a smouldering resentment was bred by the discovery that there had never been a profit, but rather a sustained loss, on the output of the mill by reason of Gregory's scruple against selling at any advance beyond the bare cost of production. This principle might have a fine and lofty sound from the lips of an orator, speaking on broad, general lines; but the hard business sense of average men and women rebelled against the concrete results of its application to their own isolated case.

"If other people did the same, it might work. For one manufactory alone to attempt it is simply commercial suicide," they said to each other, and with justice.

It became known, moreover, throughout the community, that a heavy mortgage had been placed on the land, held by a rich cotton planter in South Carolina, and that a wide chasm yet intervened between their present condition and that of self-support. A more serious disappointment and a more immediate difficulty, however, lay in the inadequacy of their food products to the needs of the people, and the consequent demand for ready money wherewith to buy the necessities of life.

The fare, hitherto of the simplest, was gradually made coarser and less palatable, since better could not be. Winter was coming on; open-air life had become impossible; fierce winds coming down through the gorge swept the valley, and scattered the foliage of the forest, while a grey and sullen sky hung over, and every day brought chilly rains. There was some sickness, of a mild nature, but it emphasized the discomfort and inconveniences of the homes. The prospect for the coming months in Fraternia grew grim. The enthusiasm

of novelty had tided the little community over the two preceding winters, but some stronger upholding must evidently now be interposed; for the people openly murmured, and began to say to each other sullenly, as once another company, "Were we brought out into this wilderness to die? As for this food, our soul loathes it."

Keenly conscious of the criticism of which he was now the subject, Gregory withdrew proudly more and more within himself, and touched less and less familiarly the life of those about him. It was well known that he deprived himself of all better fare than coarse bread and the water from the spring, that he had unhesitatingly devoted his last dollar to the enterprise so near his heart, and the patience and courage of the man were unfailing. But what of that? It was his own enterprise, with which he must stand or fall. Why should he not risk everything and bear everything? For the rest it was different. They, too, had given their money, and they had left their ceiled houses and their goodly flesh-pots and their pleasant social commerce to further his project! They at least expected Christian food!

Crossing the bridge from the library, on a raw afternoon late in November, Anna Burgess met a woman of her own age, a woman of cheerful, sensible temperament and habit, the wife of the architect, whom she had known in Burlington. The husband, George Hanson, had surrendered with unconditional devotion to Gregory's teaching, and the wife, in loyal sympathy, although herself by no means an idealist, had gathered her little brood of children and a few household treasures together, and had come to Fraternia with him.

As she approached the bridge, Mrs. Hanson, holding up her wet skirts with both hands, cried to Anna:—

"Oh, how I hate this red mud! Don't you? It seems to me I could stand it better if it were not this horrid colour. One can never get away from it, or lose sight of it."

Anna, who thus far, with only a few others, still kept heart and courage unbroken through this gloomy season, replied cheerfully that she rather liked the colour.

Mrs. Hanson gave a mournful sigh.

"You like Fraternia anyway, don't you, Sister Benigna? You always did?"

Anna smiled at the *naïveté* of the question, and assented.

"I must like what I have chosen above all other things."

"Well, I confess I never did like it, and I never shall. Oh, it will do very well for a summer vacation if one could be sure of getting safe home at the end. But as for a life like this! and when it comes to bringing up children here! —" and Mrs. Hanson's voice broke into a suppressed sob.

"I am sorry," said Anna, gently.

"Oh, Sister Benigna!" cried the other, letting loose the floodgates of her tears, while they still stood on the bridge in the piercing rain, "I never was so homesick in my life! When I hear my children asking if they are not going home to see grandma pretty soon, it just breaks my heart. They have no appetite for this hard meat and coarse bread, and they look so white and thin, and plead so for a good old-fashioned turkey dinner! I have a little money of my own, and I would spend every cent of it for better food for them, but Mr. Hanson, he says that would be unjust to the rest who cannot have such things, and that all must share alike. He

says it would cost a hundred dollars to give one such dinner as the children want to the whole village."

"I suppose that is true," said Anna, seriously; "and then it would only be harder to come back —"

"To prison fare," Mrs. Hanson interjected with unconcealed bitterness. "Well, all I have to say is that, if this is coöperation, I've had all I want of it. As for 'the brotherhood of man,' I wish I may never hear of it again as long as I live! I believe we have some duties to ourselves."

With this she passed slowly on, and Anna hastened homeward, a deep pang in her heart.

Entering her own house, she found Keith, pale and dispirited, leaning with outstretched hands over the fire in an attitude unpleasantly suggestive of decrepitude and want. He looked up as Anna came in, and smiled faintly.

"I think I have taken a fresh cold," he said hoarsely; "this climate is lovely half the year, but the other half—" and he left the sentence unfinished, coughing sharply.

Anna sat down by the hearth and removed her mud-sodden shoes, afterward hastening to prepare such scanty remedies for Keith as the cabin afforded. There was a dispensary down at the mill. She would go down for medicine as soon as she had made him comfortable. On the surface of her mind lay the habit of sympathy and care for her husband's fragile health, but in the depth below was a sense she could not have formulated to herself of resentment at his lack of courage and fortitude. For Keith, although too finely courteous to share in the open murmuring of the people, was himself in the full swing of reaction from the comparative enthusiasm which he had felt six months ago. The fall weather

had brought on ague, which, added to his chronic physical weakness, made him altogether wretched; and while he punctiliously avoided contributing to the public discontent, Anna perceived and understood perfectly his weariness with the enterprise. For the first time in their married life his patience and sweetness of temper failed; he had grown irritable, and fretted at small inconveniences in a way which chafed Anna's hardier spirit indescribably.

"I am very sorry, Keith, you are so miserable today," Anna said now, with half-mechanical commiseration. It chanced that, as she had come on her way home from the little conversation with Mrs. Hanson, a new sympathy had taken possession of her for the lonely man upon whom fell the full burden of all this reaction, but who bore it with such unflinching patience, albeit so silently. Almost inevitably, her mind being thus absorbed, the sympathy with Keith in his familiar ailments and complaints was rendered perfunctory for the time, and by comparison his weakness wore to her some complexion of unmanliness.

Perhaps Keith discerned a shade of coldness in her tone, and was stirred by it.

"I am sure I do not know," he said with significant emphasis, "how long I can stand this condition of things. You must see, Anna, that I am losing ground from day to day. Look at my hands!" and he held out his left hand to her, clammy and cold, for all the yellow blaze, wasted and thin even to emaciation.

Anna took the hand in hers, and caressed it with womanly gentleness, murmuring that it was too bad, and something must be done; he certainly was not properly nourished.

"Why, Anna," the poor fellow cried, warmed by her compassion, "I would give all my 'incomes from dreamland,' all the fine-spun theories of economic religion and social salvation that Gregory or any other idealist ever dreamed of, to be for just one day in our own dear old library, warmed all through, floor warm, walls warm — everything, you know; to see you, beautifully dressed again, at your own table, with its silver and damask; to have the service we always had; and once, just once, Anna — to have all the hot water I want for a bath!"

Anna smiled, but forebore to speak. The echo of Mrs. Hanson's wail was almost too much for her, and yet she pitied and understood. Pioneers must be made of sterner stuff, that was all; men who, like Emerson's genius, should "learn to eat their meals standing, and to relish the taste of fair water and black bread." Were there such men? She knew one. She almost began to doubt if there were any more. A few moments later she brought Keith a tray containing tea and toast, served with such little elegance as was possible, and with the daintiness of shining linen and silver.

"We must find a way for you to spend the winter in a different climate," she said, as she stood beside him. She spoke very kindly, but with the inward sense of concession as of the stronger to the weaker. "You certainly cannot remain here if this ague continues."

Keith watched her gratefully, as she prepared to go out again, sure of some effective help when her strong determination was enlisted. The last six months had revealed his wife to him as six years had not done before. As she was about leaving, he said thoughtfully: —

"Anna, I am not the only one to be anxious about.

Perhaps you do not know it fully, but the whole scheme of Fraternia is on the edge of collapse."

"How do you mean, dear?" she asked, alarmed.

"Through lack of funds. He says very little, but I can see that Gregory has practically reached the end of his resources and expectations."

Anna's face showed her great concern.

"I did not know it was so bad," she answered. "Oh, Keith, would you not be willing to help out a little more? I know you have been wonderfully generous, but some one must come up to the point of real sacrifice and save the day. You could sell the Mill Street property, you know?" and the timid tone of her final question contrasted strangely with that in which she had begun speaking.

It was the expression of Keith's face which had dashed Anna's confidence. She had never seen him look so much like his mother as when he replied.

"No, my dear, I shall have to stand my ground," he said, "and abide by the terms I first proposed. My mother's estate is not to be sacrificed for this doubtful experiment. More than ever before I feel the problematic nature of Gregory's scheme. We must provide for our own future as well as for his present crisis."

It was hard, Anna felt, as she started out again alone into the wind and rain, not to reflect that, perhaps, the sooner the experiment proved a failure the better Keith would be satisfied. She struggled against a rising sense of anger which the separation of their interest from Gregory's gave her, at the characteristic caution, the irritating prudence, the old familiar inflexibility, so like his mother. Keith's decision chafed her all the more because something warned her, in her own despite, that

he was after all justified in it. But the contrast between his softness of yielding toward his own desires for luxury, and the hardness of his withholding from the bare needs of another, came just then into unfortunate juxtaposition.

The attitude of Keith toward Gregory was complex and peculiar. When in the immediate presence of this man he was brought under his personal influence to a degree which even Anna often found surprising. Gregory's intensely masculine and forceful nature appeared to exert an almost irresistible control over the younger man so long as they were together. As soon, however, as Keith was removed from that immediate influence, he reverted at once to an attitude not only critical toward Gregory, but at times, and as if instinctively, antagonistic.

Anna went on her way down the valley to the cotton mill with a sore and heavy heart. On other days she could rejoice even in a leaden sky, in the muddy, sullen stream, in the stripped branches of the forest; but to-night, for twilight was falling now, all seemed clothed in that oppressive ugliness of Tennyson's picture: —

> "When the rotten woodland drips,
> And the leaf is stamped in clay."

Reaching the mill, dark and silent otherwise, she noted a light in Gregory's office and the sound of voices, but the door was closed. She passed through the corridor to the small room beyond which was used as a dispensary. Pushing open the door she found the room empty; the young man whose charge it was seemed to have betaken himself otherwhere over early. However, Anna's knowledge of drugs was not inconsiderable, and

in this case she knew precisely what Keith needed and where to find it. So she proceeded without delay to place on the small polished counter which stretched across the narrow room, the necessary ingredients for a certain powder, and then carefully mixed these in the proportion called for by her simple prescription. While she was thus occupied she noticed with a sense of discomfort that the voices in the office, only divided from her now by a thin partition, grew louder and took on a disagreeable quality. Presently the door of the office was opened, and some one hastened from the building in evident impatience, leaving the door wide open. There was complete silence for a moment, and then Anna heard John Gregory speak. She could not fail to hear every word, although his voice was not raised, and its wonted quietness and courtesy were unchanged.

"You will bear me witness, nevertheless, Mr. Hanson," he said, "that I never promised an easy life for those who came with me to Fraternia. I declared plainly that simplicity and poverty and roughness were to be accepted as necessary conditions."

"That is all very well," a voice replied, which Anna recognized as that of the Burlington architect, whose wife had evidently been working upon him; "but when simplicity means starvation for delicate women and children, and poverty begins to look like bankruptcy, the situation strikes me as pretty serious. All I have to say is," and the man's voice rose to a pitch of high excitement, "you are the dictator here, and you are responsible; you've got us into this scrape, Mr. Gregory, by working upon our emotions, and all that, and now you've got to get us out of it, somehow!" and with these words Anna heard the speaker leave the

office with rapid steps, and a moment after the outer door of the mill closed upon him.

Anna had dropped the powders which she was dividing now into their papers, and had started to go to the door and close it that she might hear no more; but before she could do this a step in the corridor which she knew sent her back to her place with a beating heart, and in another instant John Gregory stood in the doorway.

Anna had never seen his face changed by any mental agitation, nor was it now, save for a touch of weariness and an unwonted pallor. There was a deep, sunk glow in his eyes, which, together with the careless sweep of the grey hair flung off his forehead, recalled with peculiar emphasis the leonine effect Anna had often noticed. The habitual grave composure of his manner was in no way disturbed; and although he could not have known of her presence in the dispensary, it did not seem to cause him surprise.

"Is some one ill at your house?" he asked with evident concern but characteristic abruptness. He was one of those few persons who do not find it necessary to explain what is self-evident.

"Mr. Burgess is not very well," Anna replied, hesitating somewhat, unwilling to strike another dart into the soreness of his spirit, which she felt distinctly, for all his outward firmness.

"I fear," Gregory said thoughtfully, "that Mr. Burgess ought not to remain in Fraternia this winter. I am very much afraid that his health will suffer. Both of you deserve a little change," he continued, with a slight smile, the pathos of which Anna felt sharply. "Fraternia is not so pleasant at this time of year. Why do you

not go North for a few months? You would come back to us in the spring — perhaps?"

The apparent carelessness which he wished to convey to this question contrasted strangely with the piercing anxiety of the look with which Gregory's eyes searched Anna's face. She understood the instinctive desire to forestall another attack, to take for granted an impending blow.

Quietly working at her powders, laughing a little, by sheer effort of will, since tears were near the surface, she replied: —

"I could not be spared, Mr. Gregory, this winter. I see you are a little disposed to undervalue my services. There are several cases of sickness now, and I am vain enough to think I am needed. Besides, you know, I love Fraternia. I do not want to go away from home."

The minor arts of coquetry were all unknown and foreign to Anna, but the genius of her woman's nature and intuition was thrown into the last sentence with full effect.

The strong spirit of Gregory, which could meet the assaults and buffets of reproach and detraction without shrinking, and which would have rejected express sympathy, was mastered for a minute by the delicate comprehension and implied fidelity of Anna's words.

She knew better than to see the momentary suspicion of dimness in his eyes, or to note the silence which for a little space he did not care to break. When at last he spoke, it was to ask, in a wholly matter-of-fact manner: —

"Have I not heard that Mr. Burgess was a particularly successful public speaker?" Anna looked up quickly then.

"You may have heard it, for I am sure it is true," she said. Another pause for reflection, and then Gregory said: —

"It is becoming urgently necessary that the purpose and future of Fraternia should be promoted by some one capable of going about, particularly in the cities, and presenting our aims publicly — before audiences of people."

Anna had gathered up her powders now and put them in her pocket and stood ready to go but she stopped, and her face kindled with swift recognition and welcome of the thought in Gregory's mind.

"And you have thought that Mr. Burgess might do this, and so still serve the cause and yet do it for a while under easier conditions?" she exclaimed. "Mr. Gregory, I cannot tell you how glad I should be if this plan could be carried out. I am really a little anxious about my husband. I am sure this would work well for every one, and it might solve several problems at once."

He smiled, a little sadly, at her confident eagerness, said they must consider it seriously, and then stood aside to let her pass out and go home. It was not necessary for him to say, as he bade her good night, that he wished it were expedient for him to walk home with her. She understood his theory of what was wise for himself in such matters. She approved it. Nevertheless, she found it hard to leave him alone just then in the deserted mill. Half-way back she met Everett, plodding through the mud, with his hands in his pockets, and whistling, to keep his spirits up, she fancied.

"Be extra good to Mr. Gregory to-night," she said, womanlike, unable to resist the longing to help, as he paused a moment.

"Why?" he asked, frowning; "have they been at him again?"

Anna nodded and passed on, afraid to say more.

"Fools!" he murmured between his teeth, and plunged on against the wind.

But Anna went home with a beatific vision to soothe her spirit, of Keith comfortable at last in a good hotel, with menus and waiters, bells and bathrooms, in an infinite series.

CHAPTER XXXIII

"Lo, fool," he said, "ye talk
Fool's treason; is the king thy brother fool?"
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill'd,
"Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools!
Conceits himself as God that he can make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk
From burning spurge, honey from hornet combs,
And men from beasts — Long live the King of fools!"

— TENNYSON.

But yours the cold heart and the murderous tongue,
The wintry soul that hates to hear a song,
The close-shut fist, the mean and measuring eye,
And all the little poisoned ways of wrong.

— THE RUBAIYAT.

EVERETT had improvised a studio in a low loft over the bachelors' quarters, contiguous to the cabin which he and Gregory shared.

It was necessary, he said, for him to get down to hard work now. That hedging and ditching nonsense was great sport for a man's holidays, but he had no more time to play; he must paint. The work he had produced in Fulham had not been, often, especially salable or popular in its character, a certain mystic quality pervading it not readily understood by casual observers. All that, he declared, was now to be rigidly excluded from his painting; he should paint to sell — cheap, pretty things, picturesque, palpable. With this purpose he had set to work with a will, and by February had a few hundred dollars to turn over to the treasury as the fruit

of his industry. His pictures were sold in the North through Keith Burgess as intermediary.

He was hard at work in the studio at nine o'clock on a night in February, laying in the outline for a bit of the valley which he declared he could paint now with his eyes shut, he had done it so often, having found it "a good seller," when he heard Gregory's step on the stairs. That the boy had just brought the mail up from Spalding Everett knew, having heard the horse galloping over the bridge, and stopping before the house.

Gregory came in now with several letters in his hand, one open. He did not speak at first, and Everett let him walk up and down the place undisturbed, seeing that he was peculiarly perplexed, probably by the open letter, which Everett noticed was in Keith Burgess's handwriting. After a few moments he remarked slowly, but with an unusually incisive quality in his tone: —

"Burgess is a singularly prudent little man. Did it ever strike you so?"

"He has some capacity, however, for the opposite quality." Everett threw out this remark with no manifestation of especial interest, and it seemed to pass unnoticed.

"Having it in his power," Gregory continued, with the same incisive deliberation, "to extricate us from our whole present difficulty himself, with the utmost ease, he yet jogs about the country after a comfortable fashion, presenting the subject publicly as occasion offers, and sends me back such letters as this."

Lifting the sheet in his hand, Gregory read from it: —

"I held a meeting last night in Grand Rapids, to which I have been working up carefully for over a week through the press, etc. The attendance was fair, and

the people listened well. I regret, however, to be obliged to report that the practical results of the meeting were not all that we could have wished — " and dropping the letter, Gregory added: —

"And so on, copiously, through nearly four pages of matchless ambiguity and polite phrases, which could all have been condensed to the usual sum total of his reports; thus far, nothing!"

"Still, Mr. Gregory, we must remember that he did pretty well for the first few weeks."

"Yes," said Gregory, nodding a short assent, "while he was covering the field which was ready for harvest — seeing the men already committed to the cause. We can evidently expect nothing more from him. What kind of a speaker is he, Everett?"

"Good, really very good as a special pleader. He had very fair success when he was missionary secretary."

"I wonder at it," murmured Gregory, — "a mild, prudent little man like that with his perpetual fears and scruples; I cannot fancy his ever letting himself go."

Everett, unwontedly sober and silent, worked on. Gregory paced the room for a little while. He wanted to ask Everett how Keith's marriage with a woman like Anna could ever have come about, but he could not bring himself to frame the question, and presently left the studio.

Hanging about the door below, Gregory found Barnabas Rosenblatt, apparently waiting to speak with him.

"Hello!" said Gregory, not unkindly, but shortly. "Do you want me?"

"Well, shust a minit, if Herr Gregory vas not too busy," and the little Jew shuffled along by Gregory's side until they reached the door of the cabin.

Gregory brought his visitor in and gave him a chair, then stirred up a smouldering fire and threw on a piece of pine, which, flaring up into a sudden blaze, made other light unnecessary. The reflection of the yellow flames played weirdly over the walls, and Barnabas seemed unable to withdraw his eyes from the picture above the chimney.

"Our lady," he said simply, nodding across at Gregory, and closing his eyes impressively.

"Well, Barnabas, what is it you want?" asked his host.

"It's our lady," said Barnabas, sniffing quite vigorously; "das is it. How she fall off!" and he shook his head with a slow, mournful motion.

"Fall off what? I do not understand, Barnabas. You are speaking of Sister Benigna?" Gregory's face changed.

"So — so —" and the little man nodded emphatically. "She's got awful poor! Oh, my! Her bones comes right through zu next. My Kleine, she say our lady don't eat notin's, shust only leetle, leetle milk, an' work, work, work, like a holy angel everywheres at one time, up an' down the valley; sick folks an' well folks, all derselbe. Light come all place she come!" and Barnabas relapsed into meditative silence, having found his vocabulary hard tested by this prolonged statement.

"Do you mean that Sister Benigna is sick?" asked Gregory, with slight sharpness.

"Ja, ja, Herr Gregory; she has went home sick heut' abend from the sew class down to der mill. When she go, all go. Fraternia ohne Sister Benigna," and the little man drew his shoulders quite up to his ears in a characteristic shrug strongly expressive of a thing unthinkable.

Gregory rose, Barnabas following his example.

"I will go over and inquire," he said, taking his hat, and they left the house at once.

The night was cold, a light fall of snow lay over the valley, and the stars glittered from a frosty sky.

When they reached the neighbourhood of Anna's cottage Gregory sent Barnabas up to the door, while he waited at a little distance. In a few moments Frieda, who now shared Anna's cabin, joined him, while Barnabas, with the action of a waiting watch-dog, humble, and yet with a due sense of responsibility, hung about near by. Frieda's account was reassuring, as far as immediate solicitude for Anna was concerned; she had come home ill from the afternoon sewing class, and had a chill, headache, and fever. She was resting now, and would doubtless be up again in a day or two.

"Nothing can keep her down, Mr. Gregory," Frieda said in conclusion. "I am not frightened just now, but we all see plainly that Sister Benigna is killing herself by inches. She eats hardly anything, and yet works as if there were no limit to her strength. Sometimes I think she is just laying down her very life for us here in Fraternia, and we're not worth it," and with this Frieda's voice broke a little, and without stopping to say more she hurried back.

Gregory bade Barnabas good night hastily, and then, instead of going home, he walked rapidly down the rough road to the mill, unlocked the door, and went into his office and sat down at his desk. His face had changed strangely; it had grown grey and his lips were tightly compressed. He sat long in motionless silence, thinking intensely. Although he had himself watched Anna with growing uneasiness, the suggestions of

Frieda and Barnabas came upon him with startling effect. He asked himself now with unsparing definiteness whether this was indeed the final turn of the wheel of torture on which he was bound, or whether he could wait for another. The conviction was upon him, stark and stern, that in the end he should yield and seek the one means of escape which was still open to him, and which he had been holding off with almost dogged resolution. He recalled the shaping of events in Anna's life during the last few months, and his face softened.

Late in November, when Keith went North, she had accompanied him, having been sent for by her sister Lucia. Their mother, Gulielma Mallison, upon whom age and infirmity had increased heavily, had conceived a controlling desire to return to her childhood home, the Moravian town of Bethlehem, to end her days. Anna had visited Haran therefore, and had brought her mother back to her early home, establishing her there in the quiet Widows' House in peace and satisfaction.

At Christmas, when she returned alone to Fraternia, Anna had seemed to bring with her a new infusion of active and aggressive force. Relieved of anxiety for Keith, whom she had left in good spirits, and from the constant ministration to his comfort, she was now wholly free to devote herself to the common good. With new and contagious ardour she had thrown herself therefore into the life of the discouraged little community, cheering the faint-hearted and rekindling the flagging purposes of the fickle. She taught the girls and women quaint fashions of embroidery and work on linen which she had learned from her mother, and inspired them with the ambition to earn something with their needles, thus dispelling their listlessness. She seemed at times

to possess in her own enthusiasm and courage sufficient motive power to energize them all; she worked and moved among them as if no less a task had been given her, and with a sweetness and sympathy that never failed.

All who watched her wondered at the power in her, and many who had murmured hitherto now declared themselves ashamed, and responded willingly. John Gregory marvelled more and more at the qualities of brilliant leadership which she now developed. Within him a voice, which he could not always silence, sometimes whispered that if such a nature as that which had been gradually revealed to him in Anna Burgess, in its plenitude of power and its greatness of purpose, could have been allied to his own, a movement far beyond what he had even dreamed of in Fraternia might have been possible.

But while a certain reënforcement of courage had followed Anna's strong initiative, and while in some respects the domestic conditions of the people had been improved and their murmurings for the time partially silenced, the gravity of the situation and of the prospects for the future as Gregory saw them remained unchanged. Keith's mission had proved unproductive, as the letter just received emphasized afresh. Gregory himself could not leave Fraternia at this juncture without manifest peril. Only his personal influence now availed to hold together many discordant elements which were very actively at work and arrayed against each other. From no quarter could he discern any hope of substantial support.

And now, last of all, she was laid low; worse, they told him she was laying down her life in her devotion

to his cause — she, his one high-hearted, intrepid, dauntless ally! Bitterly Gregory said to himself that she who had freely left wealth and station was starving and working to her death to save him from defeat, and all in vain, unless — Should he calmly sit by and permit the sacrifice? Great of heart as she was, all her work could not avail, nor his, unless aid of another kind could be found, and that at once.

And it could be found; of that he had little doubt. To find it he must, indeed, make a certain compromise, but it was one which involved only himself, his own position, — perhaps, after all, only his own pride. Had he not himself preached against the subtle selfishness which underlies the passion for individual perfection? Did not the common good and the larger interests of his cause call for the sacrifice?

Gregory rose at last and went to the outer door of the mill. It was five o'clock of the February morning, and off to the east a faint yellowish light was climbing up the sky. The mill pond lay dead in its stillness below him; the water fell quietly, stilled with ice, over the dam; the valley stretched out white and cold; a mile below was the black belt of the forest, and beyond, the dim plain, with the stars shining over. It was pure and cold and pitiless. In sky or earth no sign of relenting, no suggestion of a gentler day. But Gregory was not looking for signs, or reckoning with omens, save the omen which had come unasked and taken up its abode in his mind. He was thinking, not of the scene before him, nor of the sleeping village behind, nor even of the outline of the future, nor of Anna in her pain and patience.

An old story was repeating itself within him of the

ancient king to whom the sibyl came bringing nine books, which, being offered, he rejected; and of how, in the end, it had been the fate of the king to desire the three which alone were left, and to obtain them at a threefold price.

Presently the door of the mill was closed, and Gregory returned to his desk. There was sternness in his face as he set about writing a letter, and self-disdain and humiliation; but he wrote on, and finished the letter, which he signed and sealed. Then, without further hesitation or pause, he crossed the road to the mill stables, brought out and saddled his own horse, a tall roan, fit to carry a man of his proportions, mounted it, and rode away down the valley toward Spalding. The letter which he chose to mail with his own hand was addressed to Senator Ingraham, and it stated briefly that the writer had come to the conclusion that his rejection of the generous gift offered him on a certain night known to them both was ill advised, and that if the same or any part of it were offered him now for the furtherance of his coöperative work, it would not be refused.

A week passed, and Anna, protesting that she was as well as ever, had returned to her regular round of cares. The only change in her appearance was a peculiar whiteness of the tints of her skin, such that her face at times seemed actually to emit light. The contrast of this whiteness of tint with the masses of her dull, dark hair and the large, clear eyes, full of the changing lights which lurk in hazel eyes, gave her at this time a startling beauty, startling because it suggested evanescence. Most marked, Fraternia people said, was this phase of Anna's appearance on a night near the end of another week, when a large company was gathered in the hall

over the mill for an entertainment. Anna had been much interested through the winter in a series of author's evenings, and this chanced to be the occasion for the closing programme of the series. The subject was Lowell, and prose had been read and poetry declaimed; the changes rung on all, — humorous, pathetic, and patriotic. The little hall was full and the audience eager for the closing number, because it was to be given by Anna herself, who had a charming gift in rendering poetry.

She had chosen a number of passages from the "Commemoration Ode," and as she stood on the platform with its dark crimson background and drapery, dressed, as she was habitually when indoors, in white, her eyes kindling as she spoke the noble words of the noblest American poem, the audience watched her face with an attention even closer than that with which they listened to her voice. This, indeed, showed a slight weakness, but the eloquence and energy of her spirit subdued it to a deeper pathos, while its impressiveness was most marked when she reached the close of the fifth strophe, every word of which to her meant John Gregory: —

> "But then to stand beside her,
> When craven churls deride her,
> To front a lie in arms and never yield,
> This shows, methinks, God's plan
> And measure of a stalwart man,
> Limbed like the old, heroic breeds,
> * * * *
> Fed from within with all the strength he needs."

She was half-way through the lines when a striking and incomprehensible change passed over her. Her

eyes dilated, then drooped, her breath almost forsook her, and her quiet hands clasped each other hard. She continued to speak, but her voice had lost its tone and timbre. Almost mechanically she kept on to the close of the part she had selected, but those who loved her feared to see her fall before the end. When she reached the room behind the stage, the faithful Frieda was waiting to receive her.

What had happened? Was it merely that Sister Benigna was still weak from her illness? As they broke up, these questions were repeatedly asked among the people. Some of them called attention to the fact that while she was speaking a stranger had tiptoed into the hall so noiselessly that only a few persons had been aware of his coming, but he was a man of so singular a physiognomy and an expression so repellent that a vague connection was felt to link Anna's agitation with his appearance.

This man was Oliver Ingraham.

Anna, with Frieda, hurrying out of the mill alone into the blackness of the starless and stormy night, and turning homeward, heard steps approaching, heavy and hard. Some one passed them. Anna knew only by the great height and breadth of shoulder, dimly discerned through the dark, that it was Gregory. She stopped, and he turned, catching a glimpse of her white face.

"Mr. Gregory," she said, "Oliver Ingraham is here. What can it mean?"

"Here already!" he cried almost harshly. "I have only this moment received a despatch!" and he hastened forward, as if he might yet interpose some obstacle to this most unwelcome arrival.

The words in the despatch, crumpled fiercely and thrust into Gregory's pocket, were these: —

"My son will be the bearer of the funds required. Trust you will give him the opportunity he desires for study of social problems.

"INGRAHAM."

It was the first word of reply to his letter which Gregory had received, and it was a word which made him set hard his teeth and groan like a wounded lion.

"Perhaps it is fair," he said to himself, as he crossed the bridge; "but Ingraham's Nemesis as the price is a higher one than even I expected."

Above, in the mill hall, Oliver was mingling with the people who were in the habit of remaining together for an hour of social interchange after the programme, on these occasions. He quickly found his old townsman, Mr. Hanson, who seemed more amazed than rejoiced to greet him in Fraternia.

"Stopped over, eh, to see our village?" he asked. "On your way North, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," said Oliver, smiling complacently; "I have come straight from home. I have a commission for your czar from my father, and I rather look to throwing in my fortunes with you folks. I want to see how this experiment works; study it, you know, on all sides. If I like it, I guess I shall stay."

"Oh, really," said Hanson, a little aghast.

"How are you getting on, anyway?" proceeded Oliver, craftily. "Rose-colour washed off yet? Has it been pretty idyllic this winter? Say, I should think catering for a crowd up in this valley would be quite a job. Don't get salads and ices every day, I take it."

Hanson shook his head impatiently, longing to get away from the questioner.

"Well," said Oliver, "I suppose by this time Gregory the Great has issued his edicts and made all the poor people rich, hasn't he? and all the rich people poor? That seems to be the method of evening up. I don't wonder the poor fellows like it. Should think they would."

"You will know better about us when you have been here awhile, Mr. Ingraham."

Oliver nodded cheerfully. "Oh, yes, of course. I am going to take notes, you see. Perhaps I'll write it up by and by," and he tapped the neat note-book which protruded from a pocket of his coat. "Are all the sinners saints by this time?" he added.

"Hardly."

"Well, then, we'll put it the other way," said Oliver, with a peculiar significance in his high voice, "are the saints all sinners yet?" The malicious leer with which this question was accompanied seemed to turn it into a hateful insinuation, which Hanson, with all his half-suppressed discontent, resented hotly. He was about to make a hasty reply when Gregory came up and spoke to Oliver, to whom he held out his hand. His manner was as cold as could be with decent courtesy, and when Oliver had shaken his hand he passed his handkerchief over it with the impulse a man has after touching a slug or a snake.

Oliver noticed the gesture, and rubbed his long white hands together reflectively.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead sea-shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered, the frail screen.
Mark me, how still I am!

— D. G. Rossetti.

It was mid-April and the afternoon of a day of perfect weather, of summer rather than spring.

The hills around Fraternia were covered now in sheets of flame-colour, white and rose, from the blossoming of the wild azalea and laurel. The air was laden with perfume and flooded with sunshine.

It was at the close of the afternoon school when Anna, a company of the children with her, started to climb the eastern hill which rose a little beyond the mill pond, to gather flowers.

Gregory, from the open window of his office in the mill, watched the pretty troop as they threaded their way up the steep path and were soon lost to sight in the woods. He heard them speak of Eagle Rock as the goal of their expedition, — a favourite point of view, less than a mile to walk, and nearly on the crest of the hills.

Anna was dressed in the coarse white cotton of Fraternia manufacture which was the usual dress of the girls and women of the village in the house and out in dry,

warm weather, simply made, easily laundered, cleanly, and becoming. Her tall figure, the last to disappear up the woodland path, had attracted the eyes of another, as well as of John Gregory.

Oliver Ingraham, in these two months grown an all-too-familiar figure in Fraternia, finding his way stealthily and untiringly to every favourite nook and corner of the valley, had also watched the start from some lurking-place. It was half an hour later when Gregory noticed him sauntering casually along the foot of the hill, and with an air of indifference striking into the same path which Anna and the children had taken. Gregory watched him a moment fixedly, his eyebrows knit together, and he bit his lip with impatience and disgust. Of late Oliver had shown an ominous propensity to haunt Anna, whose dislike of his presence amounted well-nigh to terror. More than once Gregory's watchful eyes, which never left Oliver's movements long unnoted, had observed attempts on his part to follow or to overtake her, to seek her out and attach himself to her. Invariably Oliver found himself foiled in these attempts, although he had no means of attributing the interference to Gregory. Thus far the intervention had been accomplished almost unnoticeably, but none the less effectively.

The afternoon was a busy one for Gregory. The mill, no longer silent and deserted, was running now on full time; and, to the great satisfaction of a majority of the colonists, Gregory had withdrawn his scruples against selling the products of their manufacture at a reasonable profit. He was finding it easier and easier to compromise with his initial scruples. It had also become more imperative to try to meet, in so far as

was reasonable, the demands of the people, since already Fraternia had suffered serious defections. A number of substantial families had withdrawn earlier in the spring, among them the Hansons and the Taylors, who had taken the pretty Fräulein Frieda with them, to Anna's great regret. Others talked of leaving, and, in spite of the greater financial easiness, criticism and jealousy were at work in the little company at first so united. The almost insuperable difficulties attending the experiment had now fully declared themselves.

However, there was plenty of work to do, which was a material relief. Gregory glanced now at the pile of papers before him on his desk, and then once more through the window at the figure of Oliver, receding up the hill. No, he could not run the risk of allowing him to overtake and annoy Anna. The work must wait. Taking his hat, he left the mill hastily; but, instead of choosing the path behind Oliver, Gregory turned and went up the valley a little distance, struck through behind the houses, crossed a bit of boggy ground which lay at the foot of the hill in this part of the valley, and so mounted the hill below Eagle Rock in a line to intercept Oliver before he could overtake Anna, if such were his purpose.

There was no path up this side of the hill, but Gregory found no trouble in striding through the deep underbrush which would have swamped the women and children completely. Soon he reached a point from which he commanded a sight of Eagle Rock, and a glance showed him the fluttering dresses of the children already on its summit. In another moment he dashed up on a sharp climb, for the hill was very steep at this point, and reached the path only a short distance from

the base of the rock. He looked up, but no one was in sight; then down the path, and in a moment Oliver came into view walking much more rapidly than fifteen minutes before, when he had entered the woods. He slackened his pace as he caught sight of Gregory slowly approaching down the path, and sought to hide a very evident discomfiture with his evil smile.

"You got up here in pretty good time, didn't you, Mr. Gregory?" he asked, as he reached him. "I saw you, seems to me, in your office when I came along. I've taken my time, you see. A beautiful day for a walk."

Oliver's small green-grey eyes twinkled wickedly as he spoke these apparently harmless words, for he saw, or felt, that beneath every one of them Gregory's anger, roused at last, reached a higher pitch. Oliver perfectly understood what he was here for.

"I have a word to say to you," said Gregory, stormily. "You will have to stop haunting the women and children, and annoying them with your attentions. I speak perfectly plainly, Mr. Ingraham; they are not agreeable and they must be stopped."

"You rule with a rod of iron here, Gregory," said Oliver, his long fingers twining together; "what you say goes. Still, you know, you might go a little too far."

Gregory did not reply, but stood watching him as a lion might watch a reptile.

"I am willing to stay in Fraternia, under favourable conditions," Oliver proceeded, with hideous cunning; "but I should think, as I am paying pretty well for my accommodations, I ought, at least, to get the liberty of the grounds. What do you say?"

"I say, Go, this minute, or I'll throw you neck and crop down that bank," said Gregory, with unmistakable sincerity, at which Oliver, suddenly cowed, and his weak legs trembling under him, faced about promptly and retreated down the path. He paused at a safe distance, while Gregory's hands tingled to collar him, and called back, in a loud, confidential whisper: —

"You can have her all to yourself this time. That's all right," and with this he hurried off, his thin lips writhing in a malicious smile, and his hands clenched tightly and cruelly.

For a moment Gregory stood still in the path. A dark flush had mounted slowly even to his forehead. He was irresolute whether to follow and find Anna, or to return directly to the valley. Something in Oliver's ugly taunt acted like a challenge upon him, it seemed, for, turning, and catching through the trees the glimmer of Anna's white dress, he hastened on up the path.

He found her sitting on a mossy rock at the foot of the cliff, where there were trees and shade and a fair view of the valley, and the blue billowing sea of the mountain ranges beyond. Her strength and colour had returned with the out-door life of the spring, and she looked to-day the embodiment of radiant health. Greatly astonished at Gregory's appearance, she yet welcomed it with unaffected gladness, starting to rise from her low seat with the impulses of social observance which she could not quite outgrow even in the wilderness; but he motioned to her to sit still. All around her the children had flung their branches of laurel and azalea, running off to gather more and bring her, and the delicate suffusion of colour made an exquisite background to the picture. The picture itself, Gregory thought,

Everett ought to have painted for a Madonna; for in Anna's lap leaned a sturdy, fair-haired boy, with a cherub face, a child of less than four years, his head thrust back against her shoulder as he looked out from that vantage ground with serene eyes at Gregory, while Anna held one round little hand in hers and looked down upon the child with all the wistful fondness of unfulfilled maternal love.

"Do not smile," said Gregory, with affected sternness at last, as she glanced up from the child to him with a questioning smile, expecting some explanation for his presence here; "I have come this time to scold you."

"O dear!" said Anna, with a gay little laugh of surprise. "My turn has come!"

"Yes, your turn has come," he continued gravely. "Do you not know that when you come away on such long, lonely climbs as this, even with the children, you give us anxiety for you, and trouble? I have had to come all this distance to take care of you."

Anna shook her head, much more puzzled than penitent.

"What is there to be troubled about?" she cried.

Gregory did not answer at once. He found it impossible to make mention of Oliver in her presence. He fixed his eyes on the little child, who was on his knees now, by Anna's side, pouring out into her white dress a small handful of scarlet berries, and letting them run like jewels through his fingers, laughing to see them roll.

"Do you not know," he began again, very slowly, "that we fear for your strength, for your endurance, upon which you will never, yourself, have mercy?"

Anna began to protest a little, her colour deepening at some vague change in his tone and manner.

"Do you not know," he continued, not heeding her interruption, "that you are the very heart of our life, here in Fraternia? that we all turn to you for our inspiration, our hope, our ideal? Should we not guard you, since without you we all should fade and fail?"

Never before had Anna heard this cadence of tenderness in Gregory's voice, nor in the voice of man or woman; the whole strength of his protecting manhood, of his high reverence and his strong heart, was in it, but there was something more. What was it? A tremor ran through Anna's heart. Could she dare to know? She lifted her eyes at last to meet his look, and what she read was what she had never dreamed of, never feared nor hoped — the supreme human love which a man can know. Reading this, she did not fear nor faint nor draw her own look away, but rather her eyes met his, full of awe and solemn joy; for at last, in that moment, her own heart was revealed to itself.

"O Anna! — O Benigna!"

Gregory spoke at last, or rather it seemed as if the whole deep heart of the man breathed out its life on the syllables of those two names.

In the silence which followed Anna sat quite quiet in her place, the sun and the soft shadows of the young oak leaves playing over her face and figure. The child still tossed his red berries with ripples of gleeful laughter over the whiteness of her dress, and not far away could be heard the busy voices of the older children as they ruthlessly broke away the blossoms from their stems. And in the sun and shade and the stillness Anna sat,

while wave after wave of incredible joy broke over her spirit. For the first time in her life she knew love, knowing it for what it was. She had not asked to know it, nor mourned that she had missed its full measure, nor dreamed that it could yet be hers; but it had come, not stayed by bonds nor stopped by vows. It was here! The man whose strong spirit, in its freedom and power, had cast its spell upon her mysteriously even before she had seen his face save in a dream, loved her, with eyes to look like that upon her and that mighty tenderness! Life was fulfilled. Let death come now. It was enough!

The moment, being supreme in its way, was not one to leave room for outward excitement, for flutter and trepidation. Anna rose now from her place with perfect calmness, and bent to take the little, laughing child by the hand, while she went to call the others together. Gregory had turned away slightly, and with his arms crossed over his breast was leaning hard against the rugged wall of the cliff, his head thrown back against it, his face set, his whole aspect as of some granite figure of heroic mould, carved there in relief. Anna heard a sound like a groan break from his lips, and turning back, with an irresistible impulse, laid her hand, light as a leaf, upon his arm.

From head to foot Gregory trembled then.

"Don't," he said sternly, under his breath.

"What is it?" asked Anna, confused at his sudden harshness.

"It is the end," he said, with low distinctness and the emphasis of finality.

Then, only then, did Anna waken to perceive that what in that brief moment of joy she had taken for

glory, was only shame and loss and undoing, unless smothered at the birth.

An inarticulate cry broke from her then, so poignant, although low, that the little child, pulling at her dress, began to cry piteously. She stooped to comfort him, gave him again the hand which she had laid on Gregory's arm, then, turning, walked slowly away.

Gregory made no motion to detain her or to follow, but stood as she left him, braced against the rock. Anna gathered her little flock, and they hastened down the hill in a gay procession, with the waving branches of April bloom, and the merry voices of the children. Only Sister Benigna, as she walked among them, little Judith noticed, was white and still.

CHAPTER XXXV

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle clung,
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day
Went glooming down in wet and weariness;
But under her black brows a swarthy one
Laugh'd shrilly, crying: "Praise the patient saints,
Our one white day of Innocence hath past,
Though somewhat draggled at the skirt. So be it."

—TENNYSON.

AT nine o'clock that evening Barnabas Rosenblatt, working around the mill stables, was startled at the sudden appearance of Gregory, who passed him without speaking, as he went hurriedly into the stall and brought out his horse. The day had been followed by a night of brilliant moonlight, and Barnabas saw, as distinctly as if it had been day, that his face, usually firm and composed, was drawn and haggard to a degree. He started to speak to him, but an imperious gesture of Gregory silenced him. Without a word Barnabas therefore assisted him in saddling the horse, and then stood perplexed as he watched him gallop away down the valley in the moonlight.

Straight on through a narrow bridle-path which led by a short cut through the stretch of oak wood to the little hamlet of Spalding, Gregory galloped. He had reached the outskirts of the woods, and was in sight of the level meadows and the cluster of lights of the village beyond, when he suddenly perceived the figure of a man on foot approaching him from the direction of Spalding. A few steps more, and Gregory saw, with surprise and

strange perturbation, that it was Keith Burgess. He reined up his horse and stood motionless, until Keith had reached him, and called out a greeting as he stood in the path, looking a pigmy beside the Titanic proportions of the horse and rider. The moonlight showed Keith more thin and wan than ever. He had returned to Fraternia once before this spring, in March, but, after a week, had been glad to go back to Baltimore, with some rather vague commission. His return at this time was wholly unexpected, even by Anna.

Keith had long since come to stand to Gregory for something like a concrete embodiment of his many disappointments and vexations, by reason of his lukewarm participation in his own purposes, his ineffective labours, and his continual draft upon Anna's sympathies. As Gregory looked down upon him, thrown at this moment so unexpectedly in his path, a singular hardness toward the man came upon him, for he was hard beset by passion; and while he meant to have no mercy upon himself, he was not in the mood to have mercy upon another man, least of all, perhaps, upon Keith.

"You are going back to Fraternia?" he asked coldly, his tone striking Keith with chill surprise. The latter assented as a matter of course.

There was a moment of silence; Keith felt something sinister in the nature of it.

"Why should you go back there?" Gregory asked now, with the same careless coldness; "you have no heart in Fraternia or its purposes."

Keith was stirred, and answered pointedly: —

"I have at least a wife in Fraternia, Mr. Gregory."

Gregory looked at him a moment with a measuring glance, noting his wasted and feeble appearance.

"I suppose you do need nursing," he said slowly.

Keith Burgess turned ashy pale. Was this wanton injury? Did Gregory wish to insult him? What did it mean? Gregory did not know himself. He knew only that, in the agony of that night, for he had fully resolved himself to see Anna no more, the sight of Keith Burgess worked like madness in his brain.

"Mrs. Burgess," he said now, with the deliberation of strongly suppressed excitement, "is more highly endowed for great issues than any person I have ever known. It is almost a pity that she should not have freedom to use her powers in the greater activities to which she is fitted."

Each sentence, cruel with all the cruelty which the climax of pride and passion could inspire, pierced the heart of Keith like a shaft barbed with steel. He stepped backward and leaned against a tree, breathing hard. The occult, mysterious quality of the moment's experience to him was that he saw himself, distinctly and as if by an inexorable necessity, turning away from Fraternia, and going back by the way which he had come.

Without another word, Gregory tightened his rein and galloped on, out through the wood's edge and so down to the plain. He did not see, in the high excitement of the moment, the figure of a man lurking stealthily among the trees at no great distance from where Keith stood. When the sound of the horse's hoofs had died away, this figure stepped softly out from its shelter and passed along the bridle-path, peering inquisitively in the face of Keith as he still stood where Gregory had left him. But neither did Keith observe him, nor care who he was, and so he went on his way toward Fraternia. He looked back once or twice. His last

look showed him that Keith had gathered himself together and was walking slowly away, in the direction from which he had come.

Keith walked blindly on, not knowing why he went, nor where he went, like a man who has suffered a heavy blow upon his brain, and moves only automatically without thought or will. On the outskirts of the village, near the railroad, he passed a barn, rickety and disused, but there was old hay in a heap on the floor of it, it offered shelter, and shelter without the contact with others from which he shrunk as if he were in disgrace, and fleeing for his life. Accordingly Keith went into this place, drawing the broken door together as far as he could move it on its rusty hinges, threw himself on the heap of hay, and slept until five o'clock in the morning. The one passenger train of the day passing through Spalding eastward was due at five o'clock. Keith was wakened by the long whistle announcing its approach, and came dizzily out into the chill and wet of a miserable morning.

The train slowed down as it neared the place where he stood. He swung himself upon it with the brief but tense nervous energy of great exhaustion, sank into a vacant seat in the foul, unventilated car, and was carried on, whither he did not know or care.

Anna, coming back from the walk to Eagle Rock, had gone to her own house alone. Here she spent the earlier hours of the evening in the deepest travail of soul she had ever known. The purity and unworldliness of all her life, both the life of her girlhood and that with Keith, had served to keep far from her familiarity with possibilities of moral danger. She was as innocent of certain kinds of evil as a child, and the thought that a

temptation to a guilty love could assault her would, until this day, have appeared to her incredible. And now, in the fierce struggle of this passion, the only one she had ever known, she knew herself not only capable of sin, but caught at last in its power.

Not that for a moment she dreamed of any compromise of outward fidelity; such a thought she rejected with horror as inconceivable either to herself or to Gregory, whom she firmly believed to be far stronger than she. But the flaw in faithfulness had come already, beyond recall, beyond repair. Her whole soul moved toward this man, who had so long secretly dominated her inner life, with a mighty and overwhelming tide.

Her relation to Keith had been that of gentlest consideration, kindliness, and affection. More it had never been; and to-night it seemed as powerless to stay the flood of passion as a wall of sand built on the shore of an infinite sea by the hands of a child.

So Anna thought, so she felt. She went to the door of her cabin with this thought mastering her, driven by restlessness, and longing to feel the coolness of the night air on her face. For a moment she stood in her open door, and saw mechanically that the moonlight was shed abroad in the valley; she heard the voices of the men across the river singing in a strong, sweet chorus.

Then, suddenly, as if the words had been spoken in her ear, the thought came to her, "But Keith needs me; he needs me now!"

What was it? She did not know. She never understood. The sense was strong upon her that Keith was near her; that he was in some danger, and needed her.

Without pause to consider what she did, Anna flew

down the river path and reached the mill breathless. The pond lay in the moonlight, motionless. The air did not stir. The mill was still and dark and deserted. The woods were dim with their night mystery. She looked down the valley, and up, and across the river, and everywhere was perfect peace, save in her own heart. Then in the silence she heard a step approaching from the direction of the woods below. She drew back hastily into the protection of the mill porch and waited for the steps to pass. Whoever it was paused for a little time above the mill, and Anna's heart beat hard with a sense of dread and danger. Finally she heard the steps pass on, and when she returned to the road she recognized the unmistakable figure of the man now moving on in the unshadowed moonlight to the bridge above. It was Oliver Ingraham.

Slowly Anna returned to her own cottage, not daring to do otherwise, a heavy oppression on her heart.

Early in the morning, which was cold and rainy, Oliver was at her door, and she answered his summons herself, full of a vague, trembling anxiety. He scanned her face narrowly; it was careworn and hollow-eyed, for she had slept not at all.

In silence he handed her a letter, broken at the edges, and soiled with long carrying about. She glanced at the address. It was Keith's, written by herself perhaps a month before; not a recent letter. She looked at Oliver in speechless perplexity.

"I found that lying on the ground down near Spalding last night," he said, still eying her craftily, and with that hurried off, giving her not another word.

Anna went in, closed the door, and drew out the letter. It was unimportant, insignificant, simply an

ordinary letter of wifely affection and solicitude, but one which had evidently been much read, being worn on the folds. Who could have carried it save Keith himself? Had he, then, been really near her the night before? Was he really coming?

Anna knew already that it was for this she longed supremely.

Noon brought to Everett a special messenger with a letter from Gregory, who brought with him also the roan horse ridden the night before to the county town, C——, and evidently ridden fiercely. At C—— was the bank where Gregory transacted all his business. This letter stated, first of all, that he had suddenly reached the conclusion that it was important and imperative that he should go at once to England in the interests of the colony. He should not return to Fraternia before sailing. He wished to empower Everett to act in his place during his absence, which would not be for more than three months.

Various items of business were enumerated, and the letter closed with this remarkable statement: "The funds furnished by Mr. Ingraham of Burlington have been returned to him with the exception of the five thousand dollars already used, which I shall restore at my earliest opportunity. This removes the obligation from us of counting Mr. Oliver Ingraham as one of our number, and I beg that you will signify to him my conviction that his continued presence in Fraternia is impossible. Do not allow him to stay a day if you can help yourself, and keep him under your eye while he remains."

CHAPTER XXXVI

I said farewell;
I stepped across the cracking earth and knew
'Twould yawn behind me. I must walk right on,
. . . Fate has carried me
'Mid the thick arrows; I will keep my stand,
Not shrink and let the shaft pass by my breast
To pierce another: oh, 'tis written large
The thing I have to do.

— George Eliot.

The following morning Anna sent for Oliver. Word had reached her that he was about to leave Fraternia. In the depth of her present distress and perplexity a thought which "had no form, a suffering which had no tongue" had arisen. Gregory, she knew, had left the village hastily that night under stress of powerful emotion, perhaps in a condition of mental excitement exceeding his own control. It seemed to her possible that somewhere on the way from Fraternia to Spalding he might have encountered Keith. The letter brought by Oliver indicated, she was more and more convinced, that he had really been on his way to her. If this were true, some event had interposed, something had occurred to hinder his coming. What could it have been, supposing him to have been but two miles away, save some mysterious, unthinkable effect of an interview with Gregory, if such there had been? It was no longer possible, no longer justifiable, to await events. She must herself discover all that Oliver knew, even if the discovery were to mean despair.

Alone, in her own cabin, she received Oliver. If Keith had been in Fraternia, or John Gregory, it would not have been permitted; but her intense anxiety and suspense overbore her usual shrinking from contact with the man, and Everett yielded to her wish to see him alone.

Oliver entered the cabin, noting its simple appointments with his characteristic curiosity. Anna pointed to a chair which he took, although she herself remained standing. Her face was as white as her dress, her eyes deeply sunken, her manner sternly imperious.

"You are going away from Fraternia to-day?" she asked, with swift directness.

"Yes," said Oliver, nodding with his peculiar smile; "this precious demigod or demagogue — whichever you please — of yours, your imperial Gregory, has issued a ukase against me, in short, has done me the honour to banish me from the matchless delights and privileges of Fraternia!" The last word was spoken with a slow emphasis of condensed contempt.

"There is something really a little queer about it," Oliver continued, in a different tone. "I am on to most of what happened between my father and Gregory, but I've missed a link now somewhere. You see, the governor, in a fit of temporary aberration, offered Gregory a magnificent contribution for his socialist scheme down here; but Gregory was pretty high and lofty just then, and, 'No, sir,' said he — I heard him, though he and the governor don't know it — 'No, sir, I couldn't touch your money. I am just that fastidious.' The governor had been confessing his sins to Gregory, the worse fool he! It seemed that his money had come to him in a way that might make some men squeamish, and

Gregory, oh, dear, no! he wouldn't have touched those ill-gotten gains as he was feeling then — not with the tip of one finger.

"But the joke is," Oliver went on, "that he had to come to it. Oh, yes; he got down on his marrow bones to the governor here about three months ago, and wrote to him that he had reconsidered the matter, and saw his mistake," and Oliver gave a low chuckle; "so the governor had to come down with the lucre, more or less filthy as it was, and I don't think he was quite so much in the mood for it either as he was at the first, to tell the truth. But he sent it all the same, and sent me with it, don't you see? I came as the saviour of Fraternia, although I have never been so recognized. The whole town has been run the last month or two on Ingraham money, and it seems to have greased the wheels about as well as any other money, for all I see. But now comes the unexpected! Off goes Gregory to England, sends back the governor's check, so I hear from Everett, and kindly writes me to take myself off. What brought him to that is what I don't quite see through yet."

"I have no doubt," said Anna, concealing her dismay at Oliver's malign disclosure with a manner of cold indifference, "that Mr. Gregory had good reasons for thinking it better for you to return to Burlington."

"You're right there," retorted Oliver, quickly; "oh, yes, he had excellent reasons, the best of reasons. A man who knows too much is often inconvenient, you know."

"Mr. Ingraham," Anna asked hastily, apparently ignoring this insinuation although she trembled now from head to foot, "I am not interested in the busi-

ness relations of your father and Mr. Gregory. It was not to hear of them I sent for you. You brought me a letter yesterday which I think must have been not long ago in my husband's possession. I wish you to tell me if, on the night when you found this letter, that is the night before last, you saw my husband in the neighbourhood of Fraternia ? "

" Oh, yes," replied Oliver, as if it were quite a matter of course ; " were you not expecting him ? "

"Where did you see him?" The question came quick and sharp.

" Well," said Oliver, reflectively, " you would like me to be exact, I suppose. Let me see, how shall I describe the place so that you will recall it — distinctly."

There was a certain cold deliberation in the articulation of these words which gave them a sickening cruelty. They called up strange visions of dread and dismay to Anna's tortured imagination.

"Speak more quickly," she commanded, rather than asked, " the precise spot makes no difference."

" It was near the edge of the woods, on the Spalding side, that I saw him first. The night was quite bright with moonlight, if you remember. I had taken a stroll down to Spalding myself for some of those little luxuries which Fraternia doesn't furnish, and was on my way back when I first noticed Mr. Burgess. He was just striking into the path, there by that dead oak tree; you may remember it. I noticed it because it stood out so white in the moonlight, and it was just at the foot of it that I picked up that letter. I did not know that he had dropped it, nor whose it was until after I got home."

" Undoubtedly false," thought Anna; " you had not

had the chance to read it, that was all," but she did not speak. Oliver too was silent, as if he had answered her question, and was done.

"Please go on." Anna kept her patience and control still.

"Oh!" exclaimed Oliver, as if surprised, "you want to hear more, do you? All right. I guess likely I'm the only man that can tell you, being the only witness, in fact."

"Witness of what?" Anna cried importunately.

"Well, that's it. That's what I've asked myself more than once since that night, and I rather guess as good a description as I could give would be to call it a kind of moral murder; a moral murder," and Oliver repeated the phrase as if gratified by the acuteness of his perception in forming it.

He watched her face closely, and beginning to fear from the bluish shade which tinged her pallor that Anna would soon be released from his power to torture by unconsciousness, hastily took another line.

"Oh, you've nothing to worry about, Mrs. Burgess, nothing at all. That was just a little fancy of mine, just my metaphorical way of stating things. It was a very simple little incident, nothing which need affect a man unpleasantly in the least. It just happened, you see, that Gregory was galloping down the path toward Spalding, and he met your husband, and they had a little talk together, — a mere quiet conversation for a few moments, — and Mr. Burgess seemed to change his mind about going to Fraternia just then, and turned back toward the village. That was all. I watched him a little, to be sure he didn't need any help, you know, afterward. Gregory galloped right along; he was going

to catch a train, I suppose, at C——, and that made him in something of a hurry, of course."

"Why should my husband have needed help, Mr. Ingraham? Will you be good enough to explain yourself clearly, and in as few words as possible?" Anna spoke more calmly now, but her eyes were like coals of fire.

"Certainly, certainly. I cannot repeat Gregory's language, not literally, but it seemed to cut Mr. Burgess up a good deal at the time, — at least I fancied so. That is what I meant by that little simile of mine awhile ago. He's all over it now, of course. It was only a few words anyway. Just that Gregory said, in that short way he has once in awhile — Probably you've never heard him; he wouldn't be apt to speak so to you," and Oliver decorated the sentence with one of his most insinuating smiles.

"Mr. Gregory said — ?" Anna asked, looking into his face with an unflinching directness, before which Oliver's eyes wandered nervously.

"Why, he seemed surprised that Mr. Burgess should be coming back so soon, and he gave him to understand that a man like him, who was sick all the time, and not much of a Fraternian, either, was rather a drag on such a woman as you, don't you see? and it might be fully as well if he should keep away and give you your freedom most of the time."

"Did my husband make any reply that you heard?" asked Anna, huskily, this hideous distortion of unformulated traitor thoughts which had lurked in the background of her own consciousness confronting her now to her terror, and her heart doubly sick with the loathing of being forced to ask such information from such a source.

"He said you were at least his wife, I remember that. I guess that was about all. It struck me at the time that there was something in what he said, with all due respect for Gregory. He rules everything here, of course, though, I suppose, — even to the relations between husbands and wives."

The last words were lost upon Anna.

"You may go now, if you please, Mr. Ingraham," she said calmly. Her look and an unconscious gesture of dismissal were imperative, and Oliver, not daring to disobey, left the place without another word.

For two days Anna sat alone and in silence, waiting for the summons which she knew by a sure intuition must come.

Oliver's story had been confirmed in so far that it had been learned that Keith had been seen in Spalding on the night of Gregory's departure, and had been known to take an east-bound train on the following morning. Nothing further was discovered regarding his movements, and it was useless to try to follow and find him. Anna could only wait.

When the message came it was, as she had known it would be, urgent and ominous. Keith was in Raleigh; he was very ill; she must go at once.

Everything was ready, and with a strange composure and quietness as of one carrying out a line of action fully foreseen, Anna went on her journey, so like and yet so unlike that other journey to Keith which she had taken in her girlhood, ten years before. That had ended in their marriage. How would this end?

Reaching the city in the afternoon, Anna was driven with the haste she demanded to the address named in the message which had come, not from Keith himself,

but from a physician. It was not that of a hotel, as she had expected, but of a boarding-house of very moderate pretensions in a quiet street. Even the small details of the place, in their cheap commonness, smote her heart. Was it in places like this that Keith had, after all, been living, instead of in the well-appointed hotels in which she had always fancied him ?

The landlady, a kindly, careworn woman, plain of dress and of speech, received Anna with a mournful face, but forebore explanations, seeing that it was time rather for silence, and led her down a long corridor to the door of a dim and silent room.

There was a little stir as Anna stood in the open door; the physician came out and spoke to her, and she saw a nurse sitting quietly by a window. But Anna did not know that she saw or heard them; her sense took in only her husband, with eyes closed and the shadow of death upon his face, lying upon the strange bed in this place of strangers.

She was by his side and his hands were in hers, when presently he opened his eyes. Seeing her, a sudden light of clear recognition illuminated his face, a triumphant ray of joy and satisfaction. He tried to speak, but could not, but Anna felt the faint pressure of his hand.

Once more his lips moved, and Anna saw rather than heard the words : —

" Good-by, darling," and with them the same look of ineffable love and peace. Then his eyes closed and he sank again into unconsciousness.

The physician, leaning over, said softly, " He will not rouse again. This was most unexpected. He has been unconscious since morning."

The end came soon after midnight, unconsciousness falling into death without pain or struggle.

Of the days which followed Anna could never recall a distinct or coherent impression. Detached scenes and moments alone lived in her memory.

She knew that Everett was there and that they started for Fulham. Somewhere on the way Professor Ward met them, and Foster, the old family servant. Nothing seemed strange and nothing seemed natural; all passed to her as in a dream.

She was at Fulham; she remembered afterward that she sat in the library which Keith had longed for so, and his body lay beside her, below the mantelpiece where she had so often seen him lean. The old servants, hastily summoned for the occasion, went and came, and looked at her, she thought, with eyes of cold respect and mute reproach. Then Everett stood there, and she saw that tears were on his face as he looked upon his old friend, but she did not cry. Only when Everett turned toward her she said, very simply, with a motion of her hand which signified all that the place meant: —

"Keith gave his life — for me." Then Everett had looked at her as if alarmed at what he saw in her face, and had gone out hastily and sent some woman to her, whom she did not want.

The incidents of the funeral seemed to pass by unnoticed. She remembered the moment at the grave when at last she fully realized that this was the end. Then she was at the Fulham railroad station, and Professor Ward had come to her on the train and had held her hands strongly in his, and had said with urgent emphasis: —

"You must always remember that Keith's physician and all his old friends believe that his life was prolonged rather than shortened by your living in the South. Do not for a moment dwell on the opposite thought."

She had felt her dry lips tremble then and her eyes grew dim, but she did not speak. The train had moved out soon, and she knew that kind eyes watched her, but she could not meet their look.

Of the journey down into the West to her mother that night she remembered nothing, save that the incessant jar of the train seemed to follow in a rhythmic endless repetition the familiar refrain of the old passion hymn,—

"Was ever grief like mine?"

CHAPTER XXXVII

From the unhappy desire of becoming great;
Preserve us, gracious Lord and God.
— *Old Moravian Liturgy.*

There is a time when religion is only felt as a bridle that checks us, and then comes another time when it is a sweet and penetrating life-blood, which sets in motion every fibre of the soul, expands the understanding, gives us the Infinite for our horizon, and makes all things clear to us.—LACORDAIRE.

ON the quiet street of the hill town of Bethlehem stands the quaint and ancient building set apart in the Moravian economy as the Widows' House.

In the interior of the old stone house, with its massive walls and rows of dormer windows, are wide, low-ceiled halls, and sunny, sweet-smelling chambers, clean and orderly, chaste and simple, as those of a convent. Here in mild monotony and peace the women of the "Widows' Choir" live their quiet life, and here in September we find Anna Burgess, who had fled to this haven of her mother's abiding-place, as to a sanctuary.

The evening was warm, and the windows of Gulielma Mallison's room were open to the sunshine and the sweet air. Flowers blossomed in the deep window-sills; the bare floor was as white as scrubbing could make it; the appointments of the room were cheerful and refined, albeit homely, and the atmosphere was that of still repose. By the window Gulielma Mallison sat knitting, her face beneath its widow's cap calm and strong in its submissive sadness. Opposite her on the sofa lay Anna, each line of her face and figure expressing the suffering of a

stricken heart. There had been months of slow, wearisome illness and of grievous mental suffering, in which her days had been a Purgatorio and her nights an Inferno; and now weeks of convalescence, which were bringing life back into her wasted frame, still failed to bring healing to her mind.

The mother's fond eyes, glancing unperceived across her knitting, noted the listless droop of the long white hands upon the white dress, the marblelike pallor of the forehead from which the hair was so closely drawn, the hollow cheeks, the piteous sadness of the mouth, the glassy brightness of the eyes, fixed in the long, still gaze of habitual introspection.

"Surely," sighed Gulielma Mallison to herself, as she had before a hundred times, "there is more than the bitterness of death in her face; widowhood alone to the Christian brings not such havoc as this. It is in some place of danger that her thoughts are dwelling. I should fear less for her if she could only speak!"

But Anna's grief could not find its way to words. How could her mother, in her sober, ordered existence, her decorous and righteous experiences of life and love and death, comprehend what it was to live with shadows of faithlessness, even of blood-guiltiness, for perpetual company? For to Anna's thought Keith had been driven to his lonely death by the hardness of Gregory, by words which had issued from the white heat of his passion for her, a passion unrebuked by her, — nay, rather, shared to the full. Was she then guiltless of her husband's death?

Not for a moment could Anna divide herself from Gregory in responsibility for the action which Oliver had characterized as "moral murder." Unsparingly

just to herself, she bore to the very limit of reason all the fellowship which was imposed upon her by the mastery of a love so long lived in its unconsciousness and silence, so soon cut off, once perceived and acknowledged. It has been said that "all great loves that have ever died, dropped dead." Anna's mighty passion had been stillborn, slain by the words which had sent Keith on his dim way to death. For she had never doubted that Oliver's rehearsal of the scene in the woods between Gregory and Keith had been substantially true. She knew there had been spiritual violence done, and her soul recoiled from the very strength and power which had once enchained her. Something of diabolical pride seemed to her now to invest even the austere morality of Gregory. He would have spurned a yielding to the weakness of the flesh, his moral fastidiousness would have made it impossible; but he fought the fire of love fiercely with the fire of pride, not humbly with the weapons of prayer. No shield of faith nor sword of the spirit had been his in the hour of temptation, for all his high ideals, but the sheer, elemental force of human will. He had conquered, or rather had grappled with, the one passion; but the very force by which he had conquered turned again and conquered him, and his very power became his undoing.

Beside this conception of Gregory which had now taken possession of Anna's mind, Keith's gentleness, his faithful, patient life, above all, the greatness of the silent sacrifice which he had made for her sake when he embarked on the Fraternia adventure, became sacred and heroic. She saw at last what his leaving his normal life had been; she believed, as she had said to Everett, that he had literally given his life for her, and the sense

of his devotion, so little understood, so scantily recognized, wore ceaselessly at her heart. Her one drop of balm was the memory of Keith's last smile of triumphant love and faith; the bitterest drop in her Cup of Trembling that not one last word had been given her to show her by what paths his soul had fared, and whether thoughts of peace had lightened his sufferings. Having loved her, he had loved her to the end, — this only she knew. His faithfulness had not failed.

Words which her father had spoken to her shortly before his death, vaguely comprehended at the time, haunted her now, "*With greatness we have nothing at all to do; faithfulness only is our part.*"

If only she had earlier discerned their meaning!

Such shape did these two men take to Anna now; the one who had moulded all her outward life and touched her inner life hitherto so faintly, the other who had mastered her in her innate longing for power and freedom, and controlled her inner life for many years: Keith seemed to her now like some spirit of gentle ministration, humble, faithful, undefiled; Gregory, like some proud spirit, even as Lucifer, son of the morning, who had said, 'I will ascend into heaven,' but who had been brought down to hell, dragging with him all that was highest and holiest. And she had thought him so different! Like another, her heart would cry out: —

> "I thought that he was gentle, being great;
> O God, that I had loved a smaller man!
> I should have found in him a greater heart."

Once, some weeks earlier, there had come to her a brief note from Gregory, written soon after his return to Fraternia. It said only: —

"I have sinned deeply, against God; against him; most of all against you. I cannot even venture to ask you to forgive. I can only say to you, the penalty is wholly mine to bear. You are blameless."

Having read the note, Anna threw it into the fire, and wrote no word in return.

And for herself—?

There was no softness of self-pity in Anna's remorse. Dry and tearless and despairing, she saw herself, after long years of spiritual assurance, of established and unquestioned righteousness, overwhelmed at last by sin; not by the delicate and dainty and inconclusive discords which religious experts love to examine and analyze, but by a gross ground-swell of primitive passion, linking her with men of violence and women of shame.

Looking back upon her girlhood, Anna thought with sad self-scorning of her young desire for "a deeper sense of sin." It had come now, not as the initial stage in a knowledge of God, and of her relation to him, but as a tardy revelation of the possibility of her nature, undreamed of in her long security. The cherished formulas of the old system, its measure of rule and line applied to the incalculable forces of the human spirit; its hard, inflexible mould into which the great tides of personal experience must be poured, seemed to lie in fragments about her now, like wreckage after a storm. She remembered that Professor Ward had once spoken to her of her inherited religious conceptions as terrible in their power to mislead, to deceive the heart as to itself; she saw the danger of a belief founded not on infinite verities, but on a narrow mediæval logic. She knew sin at last, and knew that it was not slain in the hour of spiritual awakening.

She thought of the night preceding her union with

her father's church, and the recoil of nameless dread with which she had seen passing under her window the village outcast whom she supposed to be incredibly guilty and cut off from fellowship with all who, like herself, were seeking God. And it was that very night that she had first dreamed of the mighty personality, the embodiment of power and greatness, which she had thought to find in Gregory. Though late, she now clearly perceived that in no human being could that ideal of her dream find full manifestation.

Such thoughts as these were passing behind the pale mask of Anna's pain-worn face, which her mother's eyes were watching. The impress of suffering which they gave was hard to see, and a long involuntary sigh escaped Gulielma Mallison's lips.

Anna looked up with eyes as sad as those of Michel Angelo's Fates.

"Mother dear," she said, her voice strangely dulled from its former clear cadence, "why do you sigh? Do I make you unhappy?"

"I cannot comfort you, Anna Benigna," said the mother, sorrowfully. "It is for that I sigh."

"No," Anna said slowly, her eyes falling again from her mother's face; "you cannot do that, no one can. No one lives who can comfort your child, mother."

"I have often thought, Anna, that you may have suffered," the mother ventured almost timidly, "as many others have, from the sad mistakes so common to people who regard the Christian life and the married life as ends, instead of beginnings."

Gulielma noticed a slight quickening of interest in Anna's eyes, and went on thoughtfully, with her simple philosophy of life: —

"To read the books that are written, and to hear the things that are said, young people can hardly help supposing that when they become Christians they will know no more of sin, and when they are married they will have only joy and perfect union. To my way of thinking, these wrong ideas are responsible for a great deal of needless unhappiness. The Christian life is really a school, with hard discipline and harder lessons. As for marriage — "

"Well," said Anna, as her mother paused, "as to marriage ? "

"It may be a crown," said Gulielma, slowly, "but it is sure to be in some measure a cross. It is a testing, a trial, a discipline, like the rest of life. Only, whether it happens to be happy, or happens to be hard, it is equally to be borne faithfully and in the fear of God."

There was silence for a little space, and then a laughing voice in the street outside, called : —

"Mrs. Mallison ! "

Gulielma rose and stepped to the window, looking out over the crimson and purple asters into the street. A young girl who stood there handed her up a letter.

"I don't know whether it belongs to Mrs. Burgess or not. The address has been changed so many times, but the postmaster said I was to ask you."

"Very well," was the answer, and as Gulielma turned back, a letter in her hand, she found Anna sitting up, leaning upon her elbow, her eyes strangely eager. She held out her hand, not speaking, and received the letter. The upper line, which struck her eyes instantly, was her own name, and it had been written by Keith. She could not be mistaken. The mother's anxious eyes saw every trace of colour ebb away

from Anna's face and lips, and then stream back until the faint flush rose to her forehead. She had not stopped to decipher the many addresses written below, crossed and recrossed by many pens, but, seeing her own name written by the dear dead hand, she pressed the letter hard against her heart and so lay a moment, silent.

Soon she looked up and met her mother's eyes. A wistful, heart-breaking request was in her own, which she hardly dared to speak.

"May I be all alone, mother?" she asked faintly; "my letter is from *him*. It has gone wrong, but it has come to me, you see, at last. In the morning I will see you. I will tell you then — all."

In another minute, the door quietly closing, Anna found herself alone. Breaking the seal, she saw that the letter had been written three days before Keith's death. An error in the original address, doubtless due to his exhaustion, had sent it far astray. The letter said: —

My own Anna, — I am here in Raleigh in a comfortable house, and with kind people, but I fear that I am very ill, and that the end is now not far away, and I want you as soon as you can come to me. I hope there will be no need of alarming you with a telegram, for I know that you will start as soon as this reaches you, and that will be in good time.

Do not think that this crisis is sudden and unforeseen. The physician in Baltimore told me plainly that I could have but a short time to live, and when I knew that I hastened to reach you as quickly as I might. It was for you only, Anna, in all the world that I longed. I believed that a few weeks of quietness were for us, not harder than we could bear, being together.

I think you will know that something turned me back almost at my journey's end. John Gregory is honest, and he will tell you, if indeed he knows himself.

I do not know now what he said to me, I do not care to remember. Whatever it was it should have had no weight, being spoken, I know, under some strong excitement, but with it there went that strange, irresistible influence which Gregory exerts over me, and before which I was, or seemed to myself, powerless. I felt his will was for me to go back, not onward to you, and I yielded as if unable to do otherwise. I do not know, I cannot understand. I wish it had not been so, but rather for him than for myself, for I know that in his higher mood the thought of that night must be hateful to him.

I want to say now while I can that neither you nor he must look upon these events in a way to exaggerate or overemphasize their importance. I can see that you with your sensitive conscience and he with his great moral severity may judge over hardly. The difference to me has not been great. The end was very near, and is not hastened, and I shall see you yet before it comes. If I had not been weak I should have kept on my way. It was my weakness that sent me back rather than the outward compulsion.

I shall not want to talk of this when I see you, Anna, and so I will write to-day some things which have come to my mind this winter, for I have come to see many things in a new light.

John Gregory loves you. I do not blame him for that, nor wonder. "We needs must love the highest when we see it." He is a man of great power and of the highest spiritual ambition. He is far nearer to you

in ability than I; he could enter more deeply into your purposes and sympathize in fuller measure with your intellectual life. I believe you could have loved him, if you had been free, and that the union of two such natures would have been nobly effective for good. But I found you first, and with my fond dream that a sign was given me, won you for my wife. What then?

It fell to my part, although not of my own will, to give your life the shape it has taken. Sometimes I see plainly that I, a poor, pale, colourless fellow, wholly beneath both you and John Gregory, have maimed both your lives, so much stronger and more potential than mine could ever be.

And yet, Anna, for all this I cannot wish the past undone. I claim you wholly, heartily, for my own, and whatever the future may hold for you, and however the past has tried you, I believe in your love for me, and in the union of our spirits. My heart is at rest. My trust in you is absolute and beyond hurt or harm, and all the joy my life has known has come through you, my true and faithful wife. Never doubt this if you love me and would honour my name.

I wish to lay no hint of limitation or direction upon your future. Wherever you go, the dear Lord will go with you, and you will bring peace and consolation. You cannot go astray, nor your work be brought to naught, for God is with you. All that I have is yours without reserve or condition, beyond the few legacies I have named in a letter to my lawyer in Fulham. Use what was ours together freely wherever you will, whether to establish Fraternia, or in any line of effort which appeals to you. My keenest regret is that heretofore I have withheld from you what you desired. For-

give me. Those scruples look small and mean to me to-day.

Good night, my Anna — my Benigna, my highest grace and blessing.

Do not think of me as left comfortless. I am not alone. The King is at the door, and I hear his voice. He has even come in and will sup with me and I with him.

Let his peace be upon us both.

KEITH.

* * * * * *

It was morning.

Entering her room, Gulielma Mallison found Anna fully dressed, standing in a stream of sunshine, with a brighter light than that of the sun upon her face.

"Oh, mother!" she cried, stretching out both her hands, "I can live. I can sleep. I can even cry now. Oh, these tears! how they have fallen like rain on a thirsty ground. See, mother; after all I am young still and strong. Feel my pulse, how full it is this morning, how strong and steady! I am at peace. The peace of God has come to me at last. Keith has comforted me."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
To spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.

— Sidney Lanier.

While we are not to forget that we have fallen, we are not always to carry the mud with us; the slough is behind, but the clean, clearly defined road stretches ahead of us; skies are clear, and God is beyond. We were made for purity, truth, and fidelity, and the very abhorrence of the opposite of these qualities bears testimony that our aspirations are becoming our attainments. The really noble thing about any man or woman is not freedom from all the stains of the lower life, but the deathless aspirations which forever drive us forward. . . . Better a thousand times the eager and passionate fleeing to God from a past of faults and weaknesses, with an irresistible longing to rest in the everlasting verities, than the most respectable career which misses this profound impulse.

— Anon.

It was Easter morning in Bethlehem. The stars still shone in the sky, and the little town lay in the hush and stillness which precede the earliest dawn, when suddenly, far off, like a whisper from the sky, the tones of the trumpets could be heard announcing the risen Christ.

Down through the quiet streets passed the solemn choir, the trombones blowing their deep-breathing melody in full and thrilling power. They stopped for a little space upon the bridge, and as their herald choral swelled and grew and filled the air, lights came out in visible response here and there throughout the sleeping town; and as they passed on down the streets, under

the starlit sky, groups of men and women joined them in quiet fashion until the procession grew to a great though silent throng.

From the Widows' House Gulielma Mallison and Anna came out and stood together for a moment in the dusk, watching the approaching stream of people as it moved forward in the gloom, and listening to the strains of music which called to their ears: —

"Rise, heart; thy Lord is risen!"

Soon the procession had reached their door, and, joining it with humble gladness, mother and daughter followed with the rest, greeting their friends and neighbours in simple, heartfelt kindliness.

The church was reached, and within it a solemn service was begun, and continued until the brightening of the eastern sky gave token of the sunrise. Then, as with one accord, and with the quietness of dear and familiar custom, the great congregation streamed out into the twilight of the early dawn, and, again forming in procession, moved forward up the winding hill to the cemetery, the choir with the pastor leading the way.

It was an early spring, and on the air was the thrill of awakening life. As she stood in the midst of the reverent throng now waiting, as if expectant, in the still churchyard, Anna felt the deep significance of the time as it had never been given her to feel it before.

Again the trombones poured forth their deep, yearning music in the ancient Easter hymn, the people singing in full chorus: —

"Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Come, we implore thee;
With longing hearts we now are waiting for thee;
Come soon, O come!"

Then followed, in slow, rhythmic chant, the noble words of the old Moravian liturgy : —

"This is my Lord, who redeemed me, a lost and undone human creature, purchased and gained me from all sin, from death and from the power of the devil ;

"Not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and dying ;

"To the end that I should be his own, and in his kingdom live under him and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and happiness ;

"So as he, being risen from the dead, liveth and reigneth world without end."

With awe and joy came back the great volume of the response : —

"*This I most certainly believe.*"

"Keep us, oh Lord," came then the prayer, "in everlasting fellowship with those of our brethren who since Easter Day have entered into the joy of their Lord and with the whole Church triumphant, and let us rest together in thy presence from our labours."

The sun rose. The quiet God's Acre was gilded with its misty beams, and the pale opal tints of the morning clouds reflected its glory. From the whole assembly burst forth the mighty hallelujahs of the hymn of praise, borne up by the deep diapason of the trumpets : —

"The Lord is risen. He is indeed risen."

As Anna came out of the churchyard in the sunrise light, the peace of God was in her look, and the victory of the Resurrection morning shone in her eyes.

Hardly had she reached the street, when some one

who had stood, awaiting her coming, put out his hand and greeted her. It was Pierce Everett.

"I saw you in the churchyard," he said. "I wish to speak to you now, if I may."

Anna welcomed him with quiet gladness, and they walked on together through the street, until they were beyond the crowd. Then Anna asked: —

"Do you come from Fulham?"

"Oh, no," was the answer, "from Fraternia, or from what was Fraternia. My home is there now, and will be."

"I did not know," Anna said simply, not finding it easy to say more.

"There is little left there now of the old village or of the old life. Even the name is gone. They call it Gregory's now."

"I heard that the land had gone into the hands of the man who held the mortgage."

"Yes, it is all gone now; all except the bit of ground that Mr. Gregory's house stands on. The house and land we have kept for our own."

"And there you live alone? Are all the others gone?"

"Nearly all. Some stay and work in the cotton mill, which has been enlarged, but the cabins are mostly used now by the coloured people who work the land, and are employed also in the mill."

They were silent for a moment, and then Everett said: —

"We have heard that you are going soon to India. Is it true?"

"Yes, I go next month."

"As a teacher?"

"Yes, partly, but I am also to be connected with a

hospital. You know that is work which I have always liked, and this is to be a new hospital, bearing my husband's name."

Everett was silent, and Anna noted as she had not before the profound sadness of his face. Presently he looked at her with undisguised anxiety and asked a question which she had already begun to dread.

"Would you be willing to see Mr. Gregory before you go?"

A painful change passed over Anna's face.

"I cannot," she replied quickly; "it is not necessary. Is he here, Mr. Everett? Did he come with you?" and he noticed that she trembled and lost colour.

"No," he answered very gently; "do not be troubled. He is not here. He will not seek to find or follow you. He will never leave Fraternia again."

Her eyes questioned his face, for it was impossible not to detect some melancholy significance in his words.

"Mr. Gregory has received a severe injury," Everett went on, as if in answer to her look. "It was a month ago. He was at work with the lumbermen up in the ravine. He was working midway of the river, which was unusually high, and he slipped and fell. Before he could get to his feet, a heavy log which was carried forward very swiftly by the current struck him with tremendous force and stunned him. We were near enough to reach him almost immediately, but the blow was on the spine, and it produced instantaneous paralysis. He will never walk again."

Swift changes had passed over Anna's face. In a softened voice she said:—

"How strange, how very terrible. Is he himself in other ways?"

"Perfectly. His mind was never clearer nor more active. I think he was never stronger in spirit. His body is a magnificent wreck, that is all."

"And he does not wish to leave Fraternia?"

"No, I think nothing could suit him so well as our little stronghold in the solitude there. He does not mind the changes even, as one would expect. There is no bitterness. He is too large-minded for that. He acknowledges himself defeated, but his faith is still strong in his cause."

"And how about yourself?"

"I am with him, heart and soul," Everett answered, with strong emphasis; "nothing could take me from him now, — unless my presence ceased to be acceptable to him. He is, in spite of all that has passed of failure and defeat, my leader, and will be to the end. He is imperfect, being human; perhaps there are men least in the kingdom of heaven who are greater than he. Nevertheless, he is the bravest man I have ever known and the most sincere, — I would almost add, the humblest. So we live on together. He writes, I paint. Barnabas takes care of the house for us, and little Judith gives us the touch of womanhood we need to humanize us. An oddly assorted family perhaps, but we are satisfied."

Anna listened with intense eagerness to every word, and found sincere satisfaction in the simple picture which Everett had thus drawn for her.

"And you have come to Bethlehem —" Anna hesitated, and Everett took up the word quickly.

"I have come all the way from Fraternia to ask you to go back with me and see John Gregory once more. He may live for a number of years, but it is hardly probable that you ever will see him again. He asks this

as the greatest kindness you can do him, but he told me to say that, if you do not feel that you can go, he will still be perfectly sure that you are doing right."

Something in the new note of humility, of submission, in the implied finality of the request, most of all the vision of the strong man in his present helplessness and acknowledged defeat, wrought powerfully upon Anna's resolution.

They walked on silently for some moments, and then, turning abruptly to retrace her steps into the town, Anna said : —

"Yes, I will go with you. We will start to-morrow morning."

It was late on Tuesday afternoon when they reached the valley. As they drove past the mill Anna gave a sudden exclamation of dismay as she caught a passing glimpse of a well-remembered figure which she least expected to see again in Fraternia.

"That could not be Oliver Ingraham," she cried, "and yet no other man could look like him."

"It was Oliver himself," said Everett, smiling a little.

"How can it be? What has happened?"

"To begin with, I should tell you that Mr. Gregory succeeded in paying back, even to the last dollar, Mr. Ingraham's contribution."

Anna's face grew brighter.

"I am glad," she said.

"Yes, it was better, I am sure. But when this was accomplished a sense of compunction seized him toward Oliver for some fancied harshness in the past. Six months ago he sent for him to come if he would, and he appeared promptly. Mr. Gregory had conceived the idea that something better could be made of the man

under right influences, and he determined to make the attempt."

"Can you see any change?" asked Anna, still incredulous.

"It was rather hopeless for a time, only that he so evidently, for all his former spleen and spite, came to have a regard for Mr. Gregory, himself, approaching worship. But when the accident happened up in the woods and he saw Mr. Gregory helpless as he is now, it seemed to produce an extraordinary change in the fellow. He is softened and humanized in a marvellous degree. He can never be wholesome exactly to ordinary mortals. I sometimes think he is a snake still, but a snake with its poisonous fangs drawn. Yes, Mr. Gregory has made it possible to hope for good even from Oliver."

"Only a great nature could have made that possible," said Anna, musingly.

"Yes," responded Everett, "and only then a great nature which had learned obedience by the things which it suffered."

Anna was silent. This action of Gregory's seemed very great to her, so wholly was it in opposition to his deep, instinctive antipathy toward Oliver. This man had seemed to embody in himself the evil forces which had entered Fraternia to destroy all of highest hope and purpose with which it had been established. And now Gregory had stooped to lift up, even to draw to himself, the man in all his hideous moral ugliness. Idealist as Anna had ever been, she saw in the nature thus revealed to her, in spite of failures and falls, a more robust virtue, a higher spiritual efficacy, than any of which she had known or dreamed. Again she found herself convicted of a too narrow and partial view of the working of the

human spirit in her passionate withdrawal from Gregory in his time of temptation.

They had crossed the bridge now, and up the wooded slope Anna saw Barnabas and little Judith standing before the door of Gregory's cabin. With simple and unaffected delight they welcomed her, and then suffered her to enter the house alone.

When the door had closed behind her, Barnabas came up quietly and took his place upon the rude steps which his hands had laid, and so sat, throughout the interview, as one self-stationed, to keep guard.

The interior of the cabin was as it had always been, with its rude furniture and its one picture, save that a broad and capacious couch covered with leather stood with its head just below the south window. On this couch, with a rug of grey foxskin thrown over his limbs, lay John Gregory, his head and shoulders propped high, his powerful hands lying by his sides with their own expression of enforced idleness.

He lifted his head as Anna entered, and leaned forward, raising his right hand in a pathetic salutation of reverence and gratitude.

Overcome by the new and more august repose of his face and by the pathos of his look and gesture, Anna crossed to where Gregory lay, and fell upon her knees by his side, her tears bathing his hand, although this she did not know.

For a space neither spoke nor moved. Then, as she rose from her knees, Anna said under her breath : —

" Life is greater than I thought."

" Life is great," returned Gregory, " because we live in God." Then he asked humbly, all the fire of his earlier habit of speech quenched, —

"Do you then forgive me?"

"Yes, I have forgiven you," she said softly. "I could not until, months after my husband's death, a letter came to me from him, which had been lost long in reaching me. It was so noble, so great, so reconciling, that it sufficed for all — even that," she added, with unsparing truthfulness. Then, even more gently: —

"It is altogether from him that I am here to-day. I could never have seen you again if it had not been for that letter."

"Then I owe to him the greatest mercy of my life," said John Gregory, solemnly, "and it is fitting that I should. He was a gentler man than I, a better man. I did not rightly appreciate him when he was among us."

"He had no noisy virtues," Anna said. "I think none of us perceived fully what he was until he was gone."

Then with great delicacy she told Gregory all that the letter had brought of reconcilement, and especially the word to him. He heard it in brooding silence, and his face grew very calm.

"I wanted you to know," Gregory began after a long pause, "that my feeling toward you has not been evil or base or wholly selfish. From the time I first saw that picture," and he pointed to that above the fireplace, "you became to me a kind of religion. You stood to me for the absolute purity of my ideal, untainted by self and sin and even sorrow. That picture gave you to me as a virgin soul in the first dawning of a great and noble expectation. It was a picture which a Galahad might have worshipped. But alas! I was no Galahad.

"I was bringing the picture back to this country, and

it happened, although you never knew it, that I crossed on the same ship with you."

"How could it have been," cried Anna, "that I never saw you?"

"I was with my East London people in the other part of the ship. But I used often to see you with your husband and with the many friends who always made a circle about you, and I fancied I saw a change in your look, — a change which betokened a gradual dimming of your higher vision, a fading of your ideal. I thought the people about you were changing you to their own likeness in some degree, and the thought haunted and disturbed me more than I had a right to let it.

"I came to Fulham with the picture, which I had promised to return to Everett. When I reached his house late in the evening, his mother received me and told me that he and 'all the world' were at a great reception at your house. She further told me that your husband's mother had confided in her her hopes and her confidence that a new era of social leadership was now before you, and added that you were indeed already quite 'the fashion' in Fulham's aristocratic circle.

"I had hardly an hour in Fulham — hardly a moment to reflect. I acted on my impulse and sought you and called you out from your brilliant company. You know what I said. My motive was pure, I think, whether the action were well judged or ill. When I saw you before me in that brief interview, in your loveliness, and in the docility which underlay your frank and candid joy, a strange impulse arose in me to gain some spiritual control over you, to have an essential influence over your thinking and to direct your development and your activity as I believed would be noblest and best.

"Naturally I had no opportunity to carry out such an impulse for a long period, but I think it never left me. When I saw you that night in the audience at Burlington, I knew that you would go to Fraternia. I determined in my own heart that if it could be right, you should. There was no thought then or for many months that anything could arise between us which could impair our faith and duty. Indeed, I never knew myself that it was you who had wholly mastered me rather than I you, until that day on Eagle Rock. When I left Fraternia that night, I knew all — to the very depth. I understood the blindness and tyranny of my passion, and I left, meaning never to see you again. Benigna, I did not have it in my heart to do you wrong, least of all to do wrong to your husband. It was the suddenness of his coming before me, and the struggle I was myself undergoing, which threw me at the moment into a kind of still frenzy of evil impulse. Gladly would I have died to atone for it.

"Now, looking back, I almost think I can see that I was permitted, so far as my individual life was concerned, to reach some climax of pride and passion, that I might be brought low in my humiliation. Perhaps in no other way could I have learned the way of the Cross than through seeing the failure of my own strength, in which God knew, I see now, I had taken an unconscious pride.

"There is nothing left of it. No drop of the wormwood and gall has gone untasted. But I believe solemnly to-day in the forgiveness of sins, and rest in a good hope of salvation through our Master, Christ."

Again silence came between them, a silence which

was full of peace, and then, with something of his old abruptness, Gregory said: —

"And now you will tell me about your going to India. You are glad to go; so much I understand."

"Yes," Anna replied, "it is a great fulfilment. I have lived a whole round of life since I first felt the call to this service, and now I come back to it with a purpose and conviction even deeper than those which first inspired me."

"Then the larger hopes of final destiny do not, in the end, weaken the missionary motive, you think?"

"Oh, no. That fear belonged only to the time of transition. The message I have now is a far mightier and a more imperative one than I had at first. I know something now of the reality of sin and its terrible fellowship, and at least far more than in those old days, both of law and of love. I have learned also a greater reverence for man as well as for God."

"Yes," he said quietly; "it is true. You have been in training for your work."

"I am gladder than I can tell you," continued Anna, "that I was withheld from going out on such a mission with the hard and narrow message which was all I had then to give. It was you, Mr. Gregory, who opened to me the great truth of the unity of the race, you who taught me to see that 'redemption is the movement of the whole to save the part.' I share the burden of sin and suffering with all my fellow-men, and I simply seek to lift that burden so far as I may where it presses most sorely. Can there be any doubt that this is where Christ is not known, — among pagan nations?"

John Gregory thought for a moment before he replied. "I believe you are right," he said finally. "The

needs there are grosser than here, and they are actual and intolerable; inherent in the system, not artificial. You have the gift of high ministry. You used it without stint for our people here in Fraternia, but the issues were inadequate to your powers; for the conditions were, after all, abnormal, being produced voluntarily rather than by necessity."

"Then do you feel, Mr. Gregory, that the message of brotherhood, of equality, cannot be spread by such means as we tried in Fraternia?" Anna asked timidly, and yet without fear.

"I believe that such isolated, social experiments, for many years at least, will be as ours has been, premature and ineffective. They are symptoms rather than formative agencies. They have significance as such, but are otherwise unproductive.

"I have not learned this lesson easily," he added with a faint return of his rare smile, and the swift, strong gesture with which he had always been wont to dash the hair from his forehead. Anna knew without words that in the fall of Fraternia his dearest hopes, his most cherished plans, and highest pledges had fallen too. It was not necessary to open the old wound that she should know his pain.

"There are more steps between the clear perception of a condition and the application of remedial measures than I supposed before I started our colony here. I was in a hurry, but God seems to have plenty of time. There must be years, generations, perhaps — I sometimes fear it — centuries still of education and training before men understand that they are not created oppressors by the grace of God, nor oppressed by the will of God. I read this the other day," he continued, taking

a book from the table beside him; "it will show you what I mean: 'When a man feels in himself the upheaval of a new moral fact, he sees plainly enough that that fact cannot come into the actual world all at once — not without first a destruction of the existing order of society — such a destruction as makes him feel satanic; then an intellectual revolution; and lastly only a new order embodying the new impulse.'

"That is good," he commented, laying the book down, "but what is said there in a few sentences may, in actual fulfilment, require several centuries."

"It is hard to wait," said Anna.

"Yes, it is hard," Gregory repeated, his eyes resting on her face with that sympathetic response to her thought which, she was startled to find, could still stir the old warm tremor in her heart; "but I can wait, can't you? You can if you believe, as we are bound to believe, in a 'divine event toward which the whole creation moves.' I believe, I thank God, also, that, unworthy and powerless as I am in this marred soul and destroyed body of me, I can still hope, still work, still greet the unseen and expect the impossible."

They talked long, and Anna rose at last to go.

"Oh, you will be leaving now!" John Gregory cried, as if he had forgotten that she did not belong to Fraternia.

"Yes," Anna said gently, "I am to return to Spalding in an hour for the night, and I start home from there in the morning."

"Yes," he said, "that is right. You must go;" but with the thought all colour left his face, and his breath came hard and fast. She saw the physical change in him then. She had hardly seen it before.

"Can I help you? Can I bring you anything you need?" she asked quickly.

He pointed to a glass on the mantel, and said, smiling faintly: —

"It is so new to make others wait on me. It is not quite easy to lie here and submit to be served, — even by you, Benigna."

As she brought him the glass, the simple act of service bore with it a peculiar power of suggestion and produced upon Anna herself an effect far beyond its apparent importance; for, as she thus served Gregory in his helplessness, a wave of yearning compassion and pure womanly tenderness broke over her heart. He would lie here for years, perhaps, prostrate, defeated, suffering, and she who had so loved him would go her way and leave him alone and uncomforted! Could it be right?

Before the imperious power of this question all other motives lost their significance.

Gregory had recovered from the sharpest effect of his agitation, and raised his eyes again, full of patient and quiet sorrow.

"Tell me," she cried low and breathlessly, "shall I stay? I said I wished only to go where was most need of me. Is it here? Oh, I trust you wholly now, John Gregory! If you need my service, I will serve you while we both live."

Then, as they faced each other with looks of solemn question, Anna saw into the depth of the man's strong spirit, and she was prepared for what would follow.

"That might have been," he said very slowly, and as if he were pronouncing his own doom, "even that unspeakable joy; but I myself, my child, made it impos-

sible. Do you no longer see the great gulf fixed between you and me?"

He was holding both her hands now, and his own were firm and steady, but his face reflected the stern agony of the moment, while that of Anna was white as death. A throbbing silence filled the room, and all the air seemed to vibrate with the fierce pulsations of their hearts, for in both the cry arose that their punishment, self-inflicted, was greater than they could bear.

Then calmness fell, for as with one consent their eyes met again, and each perceived the light of a final spiritual conquest, and the shadow of an ultimate renunciation.

Again, as once before, John Gregory said, "It is the end," and thus, most quietly, they parted.

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It was evening when Anna left Fraternia. As the road entered the woods where the valley widened to the plain, she turned and caught a last glimpse of the solitary light which shone from the lowly house on the river's farther side.

Through all the years and changes which remained to her, never did Anna lose the vision of that light, shining apart in the high valley. But John Gregory she never saw again.

THE END